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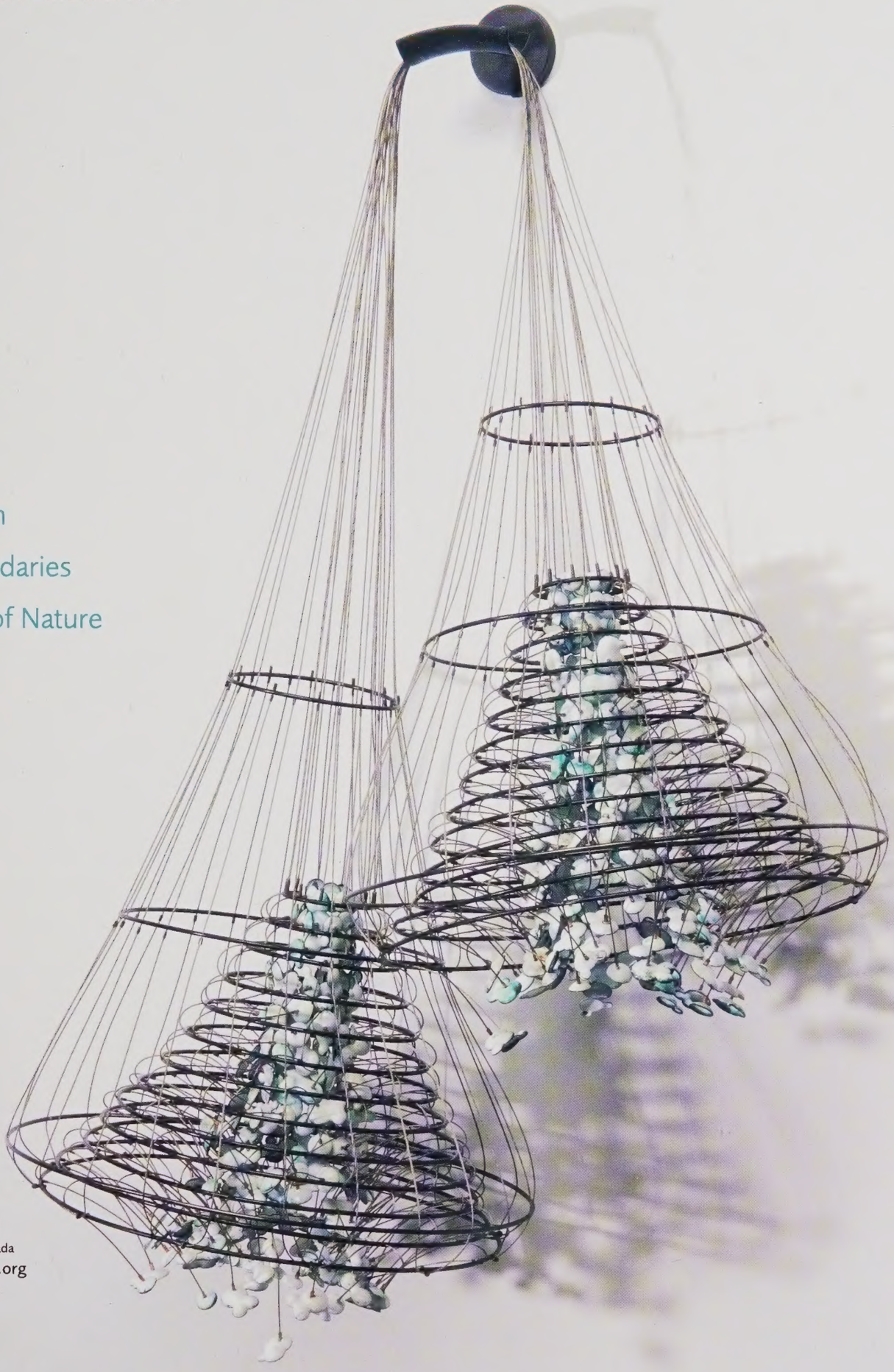

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SUSIE GANCH
Rest, 2007
steel, enameled copper
10 1/2 x 22 1/2 x 20"

from top
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Untitled, 2007 (detail)

DAVID HUANG
Lucent Terrain #589, 2007 (detail)

JAN YAGER
The Tiara of Useful Knowledge, 2006 (detail)

SURFACES

June 17 – August 9

"Black Rose" brooch in oxidized sterling silver by Silvia Uhlenbruch.

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Marianne Anderson
Peggy Eng
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FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

"Only connect." These two words form the resonant epigraph of E.M Forster's 1910 novel *Howard's End*, set in rapidly changing Victorian London. This phrase also provides a fitting coda to the contents of this issue of *Metalsmith*. Implicit in many of these articles is an appeal for connectedness and communality.

The jewelry of cover artist Susie Ganch is rooted in a deeply unified worldview and sense of life's interconnectedness. Her open structures with flexible extensions are designed to convey the porous interplay between the body and its surroundings. "We are just permeable matter," says Ganch, and she accordingly builds works that demonstrate the fluidity of material experience.

In her essay on biophilia and jewelry, biology professor Maura Flannery provides testimony for our essential connection to the natural world. This vital instinct to bond with other species finds repeated expression in animal- and plant-based adornment through history. By stressing the ties between jewelry and nature, Flannery hopes to awaken the innate biophilia in others and to spur greater appreciation and preservation of the living environment.

A desire to connect also informs the work of David Huang, whose luminous copper vessels lure one into their glowing hollows and provide a calm respite to recollect oneself.

Reconnecting with the public motivates designer Benjamin Lignel's article on the untapped potential within mass-produced art jewelry. Lignel unravels the biases that prevent contemporary jewelers from creating editions, which could infuse the marketplace with wondrous, yet affordable works. In the process, Lignel reminds us that the greatest obstacles to making connections are often abstract concepts rather than any physical barrier...

METALSMITH

a publication of SNAG, the organization for jewelers, designers, and metalsmiths

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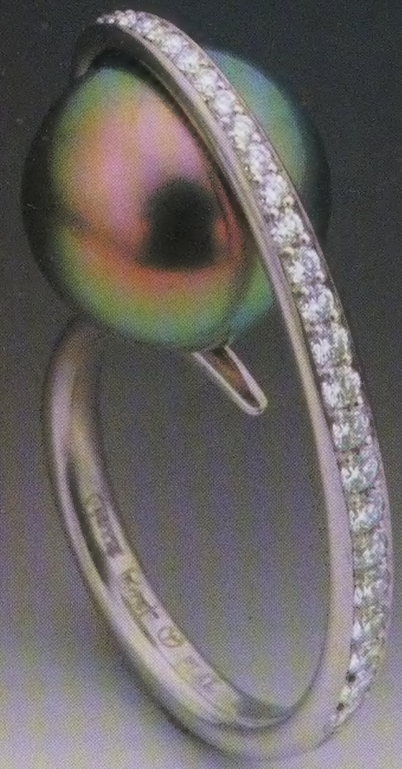

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Julia Lowther, *Tapered Square Byzantine Necklace*, 2006 Metal

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Natasha Overholtzer, *Shaman in Flower*, 2007, Metal

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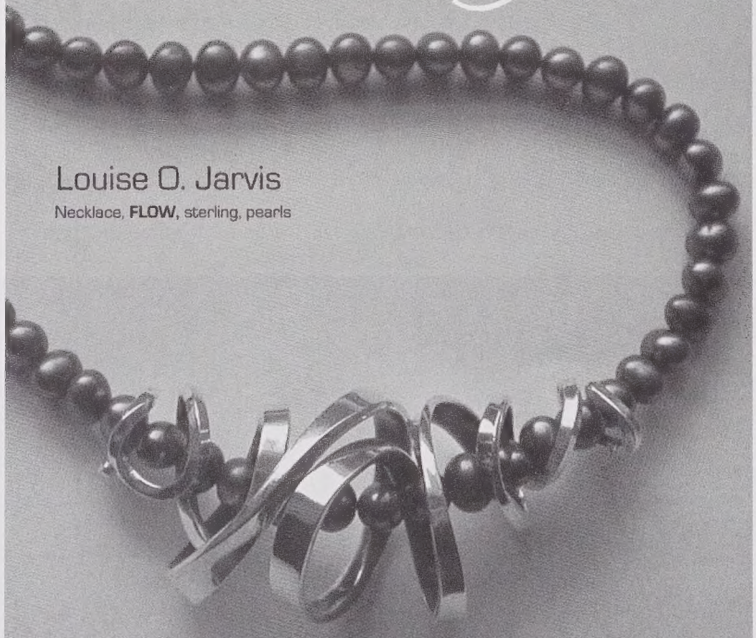

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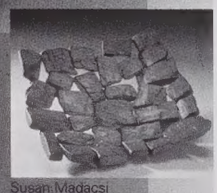

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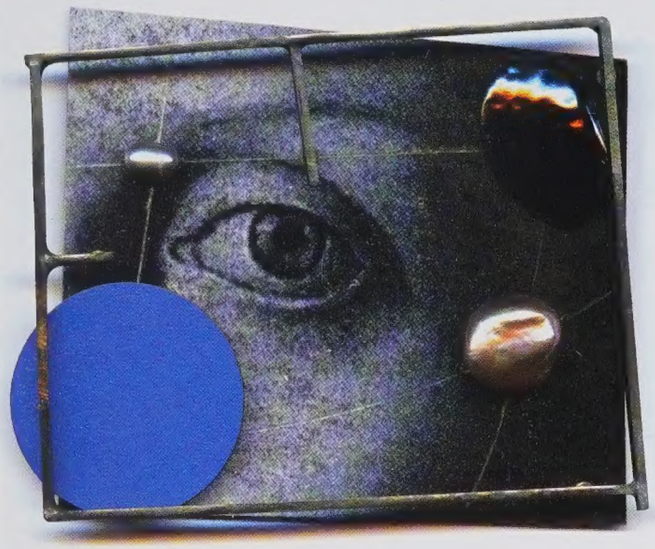

Ramon Puig Cuyàs, Brooch, 2008. *Cum Grano Salis*: Silver, nickel silver, plastic, paper, epoxy resin, pearl.

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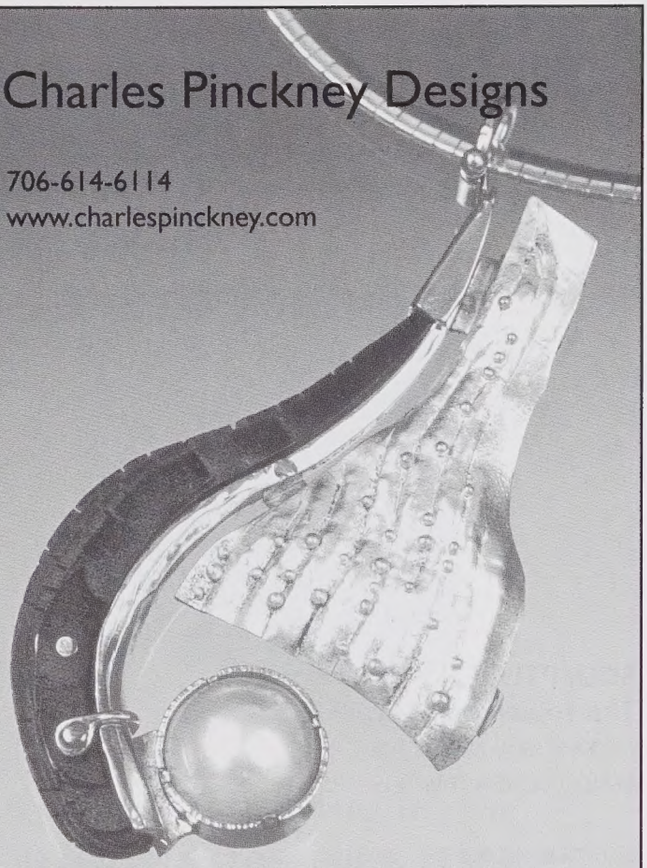

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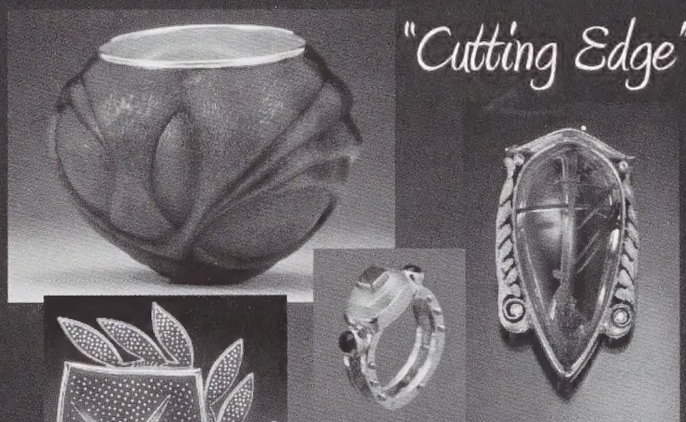

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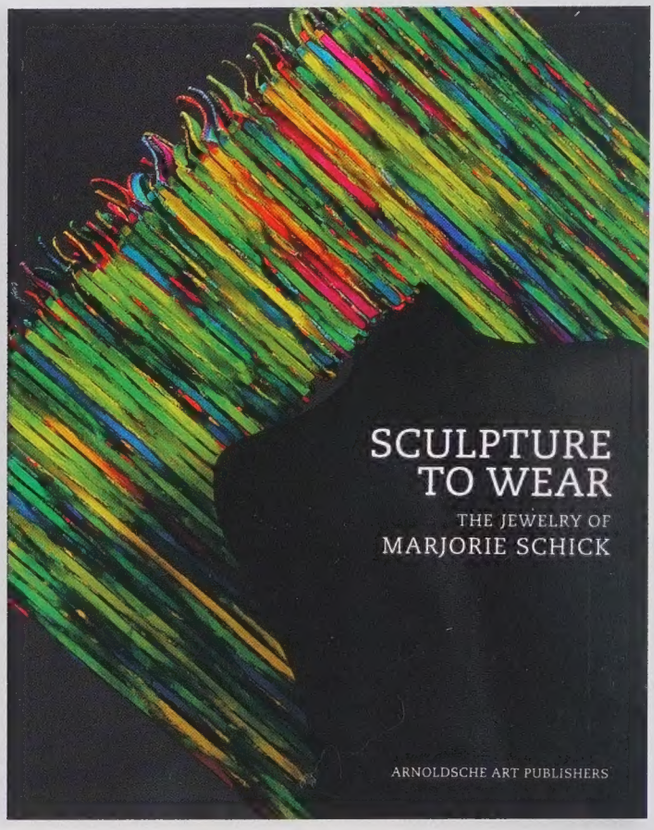


SCULPTURE TO WEAR: The Jewelry of Marjorie Schick

TACEY ROSOLOWSKI ET AL.
ARNOLDSCHE ART PUBLISHERS, STUTTGART, 2007

by URSULA NEUMAN

Marjorie Schick has stood her ground at the nexus of jewelry, sculpture, and performance art for more than 40 years. *Sculpture to Wear*, the first monograph devoted to her adventurous work, is a celebration of Schick's oeuvre. It is also a triumph of book design, destined to be a collector's item that no devotee of the artist or aficionado of avant-garde jewelry will want to be without.

Bold in execution, this stunning volume reflects the spirit of exploration that has characterized Schick's career. Book designer Silke Nalbach's abundantly colorful layouts change from page to page, in joyous response to the chronologically unfolding artwork. Frequent quotations by the artist run at right angles to the body of the text, requiring the reader to turn the book to read them, a design element that echoes Schick's keen interest in connecting with her audience.

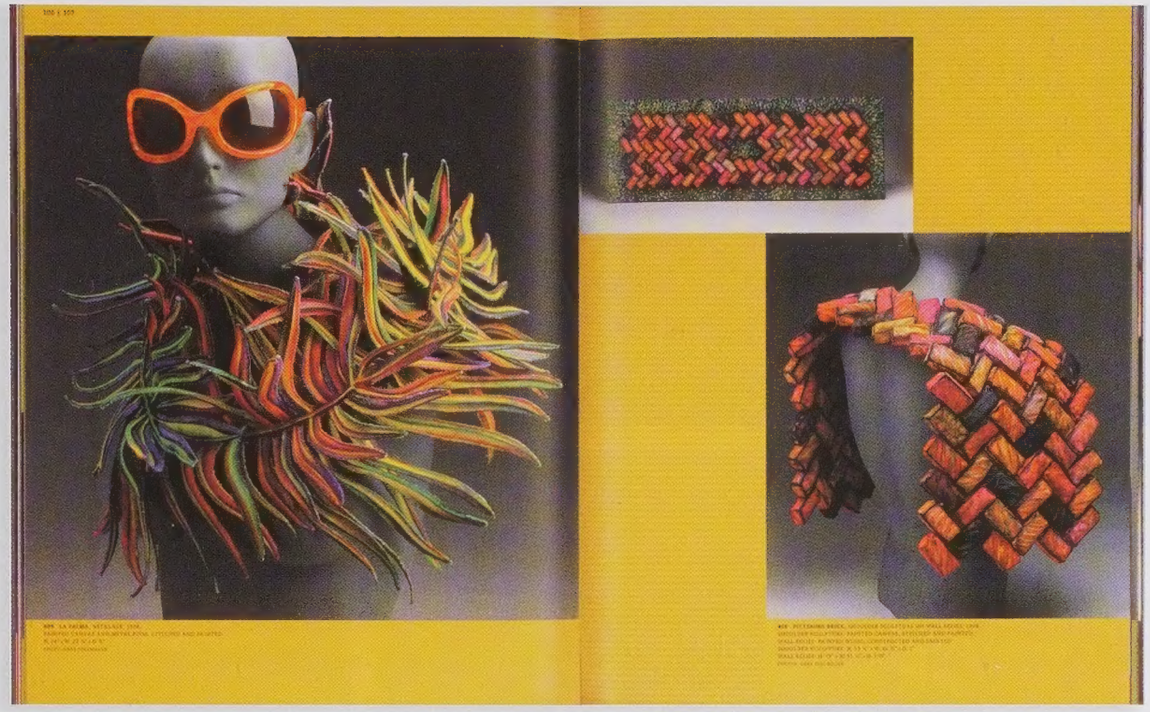
The book's ten contributors provide thoughtful content that adds to the appreciation of Schick's work. The principal essay, "Sculpture Transformed: The Work of Marjorie Schick," is by Tacey A. Rosolowski, writer, lecturer, and curator of the touring retrospective exhibition of the artist's work, and although one wishes the essay were longer, it serves as a launching platform to explore the rich material distributed throughout the volume. The author breaks Schick's career into two periods: from her graduate work in the 1960s into the 1980s, when she established her visual vocabulary; and from the 1980s to the present, as she has built upon the strong identity she has established to investigate an astonishing range of artistic interests.

Rosolowski provides a lively biographical background on Schick. It was in the late 1960s, as a graduate student at the University of Indiana under metalworker Alma Eikerman, that Schick began expanding the boundaries of jewelry with "fearless" experiments in mixed media, working with colorful painted wood dowels to create what became "paintings in the round" that broke with traditional sculpture stereotypes.

Rosolowski describes a pivotal episode in 1966 when, after reading an *Art in America* article about the large abstract sculptures of David Smith, the 25-year-old artist imagined what it would feel like to put her hand or head through an opening in one of his forms. This transformative moment gave her the nerve to extend her forms into space and make them her own. Trained as a jeweler and metalworker, Schick was compelled to find new mediums in order to extend her experiments with volume, line, and scale into spatial compositions. She taught herself papier-mâché, and painted her dramatic forms as a means of adding gestural elements to suggest movement and mood.

Schick is undoubtedly best known for her complex "Dowel-Stick" constructions of the early 1980s, which resonate with the revolutionary late 1960s European concept of jewelry that sought to extend its parameters well beyond the conventional boundaries of form, materials, and color. When her work appeared prominently in Amsterdam and London, Schick notes that her "life changed forever."[1] Curiously, while Americans perceived her as part of an international jewelry movement, Europeans found her work very American. Schick came to understand that their perception related to her total sense of freedom from history, to do whatever she wanted.[2] Ultimately, Schick is an independent and compelling voice that defies easy characterization.

Schick's later works absorbed influences ranging from teapots to ladder-back chairs, Egyptian tomb paintings to autobiographical references. These works are very much "paintings in the round" with ever-changing canvases that remain tied to the human body.



SHE HAS ALWAYS WANTED HER WORK TO BE ASSERTIVE, NEVER PASSIVE, MAKING THE WEARER A WILLING AND HIGHLY VISIBLE ACCOMPLICE IN MANIPULATING FORM IN SPACE.

The book is aptly titled *Sculpture to Wear*, for while Schick's work is closer in spirit to sculpture than to jewelry, it remains incomplete without the human body. Are Schick's works sculptures to wear, or paintings to wear, or both? In his brief but perceptive essay, art historian Glen R. Brown rightfully notes that Schick's works cannot be neatly categorized as painting, sculpture, or jewelry using the canons of Western art. He discusses some of the cultural influences that Schick has introduced into her work, including Japanese *Hinamatsuri* dolls and Native American beaded cradleboards. Schick's pieces do more than dazzle the eye, Brown argues; their rich metaphoric content explores the space occupied by the human body and its relation to the physical objects it contacts.

Other pithy historical or anecdotal remembrances come from fellow jeweler Helen Shirk, who discusses Schick's early works, and from Paul Derrez, the founder of Amsterdam's Gallery Ra, which first featured Schick in a 1983 exhibition. Tributes to her adventurous nature and to her early groundbreaking accomplishments are provided by Helen Drutt English and Paul Smith, respectively. *Metalsmith* editor Suzanne Ramljak offers insight by reflecting on what it is actually like to wear Schick's sculpture, emphasizing the physicality that the wearer experiences through the attributes of weight, touch, and movement. In effect, Ramljak remarks that the sculpture wears the body, transforming it into a base to support the object. The remaining short texts are by jewelry historian and curator Elizabeth Goring, who considers Schick's importance within the New Jewelry Movement that began in Europe and England in the 1980s, and by Fritz Falk, a goldsmith and former director of the Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim, whose epilogue emphasizes the wearer as the integral constituent of Schick's art.

A frequent criticism of jewelry exhibitions today, as well as of photographs of jewelry, is the inability to see the pieces on the body. A major benefit and pleasure of *Sculpture to Wear* is that we do indeed see Schick's works represented on the human body or mannequins. This practice is particularly critical for appreciating Schick's oversize work, which reaches out into the wearer's and viewer's space, and cannot be fully comprehended for scale and composition unless seen on the body. A kaleidoscopic "oeuvre catalogue" includes a comprehensive 475 images of works from 1961 to 2006, many of which depict models discreetly clad in unadorned black garments. The appendix features selected artist statements that reflect Schick's remarkably consistent view of art over the decades. The book's timeline is augmented by photographs of memorable events in Schick's life, as well as a thorough bibliography and resumé.

It is remarkable that Schick has exerted a profound influence on contemporary jewelry while living quietly in Kansas, since 1967 as a member of the Art Department of Pittsburg State University. She has always wanted her work to be assertive, never passive, making the wearer a willing and highly visible accomplice in manipulating form in space, with the human body as a fulcrum.

Even after the initial "wow" effect wears off, or perhaps, especially after it has worn off, this stunning and thoroughly informative publication will provide readers with an enjoyable and fulfilling encounter with an artist of exceptional vision.

URSULA NEUMAN is curator of contemporary jewelry at the Museum of Arts & Design, New York.

1 *Sculpture to Wear: The Jewelry of Marjorie Schick*, p. 27.

2 2004 interview of the artist for the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. Online reference at: http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/index.cfm/fuseaction/OralHistories.ViewOralHistory/CollectionID/11818

NANOPOD HYBRID STUDIO

by BARBARA ISHERWOOD

At Nanopod Hybrid Studio in Toronto, owner and chief alchemist Tosca Terran forms metal and glass into elegant adornments of otherworldly beauty. Under her leadership students learn to manipulate materials, and follow her path in the creation of decidedly unusual jewelry. Located in a storefront on a busy corridor in Toronto's Annex area, the studio is also a retail outlet for Terran's work. Behind glass windows frosted with the swirling tentacle designs that are part of the Nanopod "look," lies a compact 400-square-foot space that is a veritable beehive of activity; an appropriate metaphor, considering the uncanny organic feel of Terran's work.

The innovative nature of Nanopod Hybrid Studio is characteristic of the forward-thinking owner. Born in San Francisco, Terran made Taos, New Mexico, her home for 13 years before moving to Toronto in 2001. In addition to being trained in metalsmithing and glass, Terran is a computer wiz who has been incorporating multimedia into her jewelry since 1997, when she was invited into the exhibition, "Taos, The Next Generation." "The impetus to stretch the boundaries for what I was doing was the fact that some of the painters in the exhibit were vocally upset that a 'jeweler' had been curated to exhibit work beside theirs," says Terran. "Although none of the painters had seen my work, it was a classic case of craft versus art."

Terran turned a negative into a positive, and has been engineering fascinating marriages of precious metal and high technology ever since, inspired by biotechnology, anatomical studies, and all things microscopic. "I like to mimic organic forms and create 'transgenic' organisms," says the artist, whose creations often appear ready to wiggle away. In the "Transgenic Implants" series (2003-07), she combined touch sensors, sterling silver, LED, a motor, motion detectors, animal intestine, sound chips, and muscle wire to create strange prostheses with lives of their own. For her installation *Orbis Tertius* at Toronto's *new* gallery in 2004, Terran supplemented her futuristic adornments with experimental video, creating an immersive environment inspired by a Jorge Luis Borges story about an alternative world.

Terran got a taste of running a studio open to the public while working out of Fishbowl Studio, a space in Toronto's fashionable Historic Distillery District. But visitors to this tourist destination were not the right audience for her adventurous work. However, when instructing students there, "the unexpected happened," she says: "I realized that I really enjoyed teaching."

Searching for a space where she could work, teach, and showcase her jewelry, Terran chose Harbord Street, just west of the University of Toronto and close to downtown. Lined with boutiques, specialty bookshops, a well-known bakery, and both take-out and high-end restaurants, Harbord attracts university students, alternative culture buffs, and Annex residents turned off by shopping malls. Combining her studio with a teaching facility and small gallery provides Terran with additional revenue streams that she can schedule to her convenience. Although small, Nanopod Hybrid Studio is fully equipped. "I am set up for almost all aspects of metalsmithing: enameling, hydraulic press, respousse, centrifugal casting, electroforming, plating/anodizing, etching, including screen-printing in the basement," says Terran.

Nanopod also has facilities for glasswork, including torches and annealers for flame working and a larger kiln for glass fusing and casting. "I was looking for a medium that could offer transparency and convey a sense of "flow," says Terran, who added glass to her artistic arsenal several years ago. "I also discovered and was greatly inspired by the glass works of the Blashka brothers, who made scientific models, and works based on the drawings of biologist Ernst Haeckel." Her lovely *Perelandrian Ring* features a glowing red glass tentacle surrounded by silver tendrils that sprout from a mushroom-shaped base perched high on a band. Terran does her multimedia work at home, where she shares a digital audio and video studio with her collaborator and partner Andrei Gravelle.

Courses and workshops at Nanopod cover jewelry making, glass fusing, and flame working, in groups of up to seven students working at the six available benches. The student work on her web site, www.nanopod.tv, illustrates the imaginative approach Terran elicits from her pupils.

Nanopod's Open Studio allows individuals to rent bench time to work on

"IT'S A SPACE I ENJOY WALKING INTO BECAUSE I FEEL REVITALIZED AND INSPIRED BY IT, AND IT MAKES ME HAPPY WHEN MY STUDENTS SAY THE SAME THING."

their projects with or without Terran's guidance. Terran also offers limited private workshops and individual instruction. "While it's not very efficient for me to teach one on one, I occasionally do so, based on the merit or my interest in the project," says Terran. "One of my recent private students was a mount maker for the Art Gallery of Ontario who was looking at expanding their resources to mount an upcoming exhibit."

Each December Nanopod hosts the Nanotacular, a holiday sales event showcasing local artists' craft-based work in all media. Guests enjoy hot apple cider and treats while talking to the artists and choosing from one-of-a-kind and limited production pieces. These events increase awareness of Nanopod and generate sales, although Terran reports that most of her work is in fact sold online.

Her current work-in-progress, "Descent to Perelandra," is a series of flame-worked and blown glass and metal adornments inspired by *Descent*, a C.S. Lewis story that describes "...a misty world of strange desires, sweet smells, and delicious tastes..." Terran and Gravelle are writing a soundtrack for an installation that will evoke the atmosphere of this magical land. Multiple elements linked by a central concept is a key aspect of Terran's vision, and is very evident at Nanopod, where space-age domed showcases on varying levels replace the boring boxes so typical of jewelry display.

Despite the challenges of working in such a small space—"nano, in fact" says the artist—Terran is deeply satisfied with the direction of Nanopod Hybrid Studio. "The space, what I am doing in it, the branding, is all congruous with the vision that I have, and by at least being able to be true to my own artistic vision, the collision of art and commerce has been a gentle one," says Terran. "It's a space I enjoy walking into because I feel revitalized and inspired by it, and it makes me happy when my students say the same thing."

BARBARA ISHERWOOD is a Toronto-based writer on visual arts and culture.

opposite
Tosca Terran, jeweler and owner of Nanopod Hybrid Studio in Toronto, 2007

clockwise from top
Jeweler's benches and workshop facilities at Nanopod

TOSCA TERRAN
Perelandrian Ring, 2006-08
sterling silver, flameworked/blown glass
4 x 2 3/4 x 1 3/4"

Domed showcases feature Tosca Terran's work in the studio's front display area

POSSESSED

THE BOARDMAN FAMILY COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

by JO LAURIA

Lois Boardman didn't acknowledge herself as a collector until recently, even though she had gathered more than 300 significant pieces of contemporary jewelry. Fond of referring to herself as an "accumulator," Boardman had to accept that she was labeled a "serious collector" in a field that was being revalued in the art world, claiming new converts within the museum community, and welcoming other enthusiastic supporters and collectors. Her epiphany was sparked by several key events, including the development of the Art Jewelry Forum collectors' group over the past decade; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's acquisition and 2007 exhibition of the Daphne Farago jewelry collection; and the announced plans to tour the current exhibition of the Helen Williams Drutt Collection of contemporary jewelry by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Boardman now realized it was time to admit to her "serious folly," and start the daunting process of documenting her accumulations, cataloguing works that have been closeted from the field, some for more than 20 years. In this effort, she looked to the advice and example of her mentor, friend, and confidante, Helen Drutt.

"FOLLOW YOUR NOSE.
LIKE IT, WEAR IT, LEND IT.
EITHER YOU GET IT, OR YOU DON'T."

- Lois Boardman on collecting

Boardman and Drutt have a shared history in the arts dating back to the early 1980s, when both served as volunteers of the National Task Force in the Crafts, a team of 32 volunteers enlisted by Eudorah Moore, then Craft Coordinator of the National Endowment for the Arts. The volunteers were trained to gather pertinent information about crafts from every region in the United States. During the one-year term, Boardman and Drutt were frequently paired as roommates. Hailing from Southern California, Boardman had studied ceramics under Ralph Bacerra at Chouinard Art Institute, directed programs for the Pasadena Art Museum, and assumed the directorship of the California Design Exhibition Series, replacing

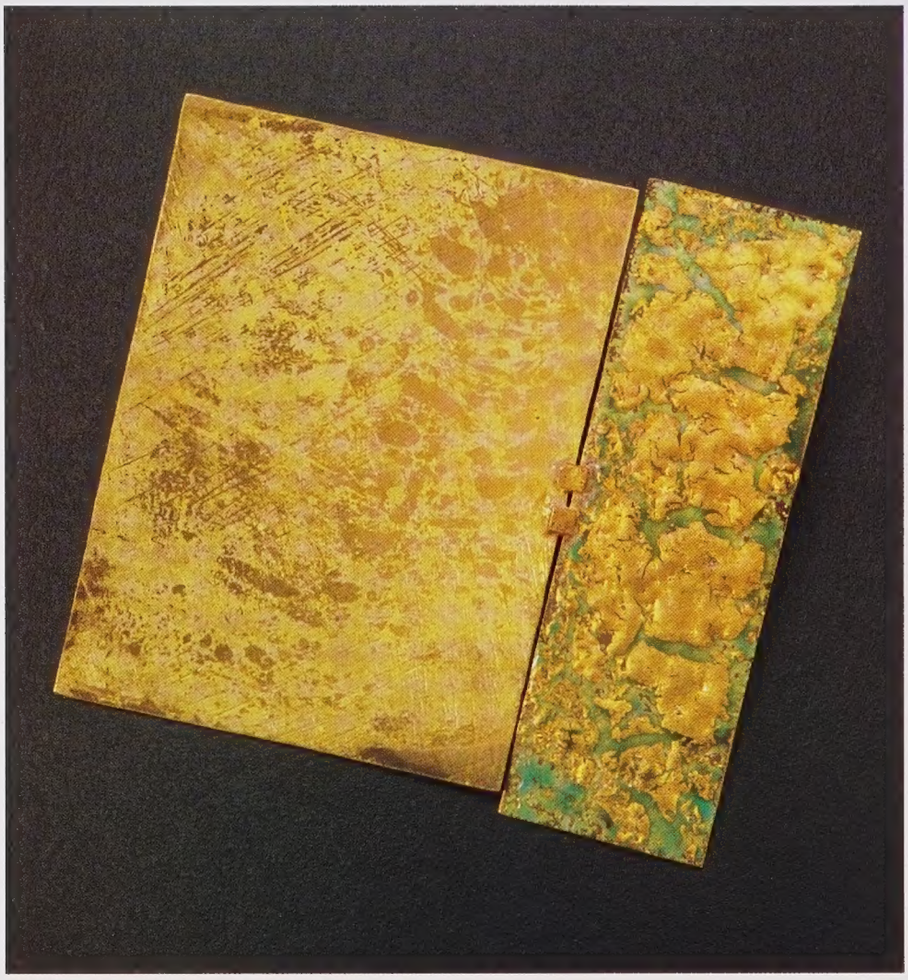
Moore. Drutt founded the Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia in 1974, specializing in the crafts, and became recognized as an expert and activist in the field. Their pairing was portentous and serendipitous. Boardman remembers: "Helen was, *at all times*, wearing an intriguing piece of jewelry; a clever way to initiate conversation. Helen felt that as long as she was selling it, she had an obligation to be its best promoter. Her avant-garde taste in jewelry—and commitment to wearing it; her vast knowledge of the field; and her close relationships with jewelers from every continent piqued my interest and eventually led me down the ruinous path of collecting. I am indebted to Helen for exposing me to the field of contemporary jewelry, and for all the fun and wonder I've had pursuing this adventure."

And thus began a lifelong friendship, a kinship bound by their mutual appreciation, dedication, and absolute pursuit of acquiring and collecting jewelry of their time. Since then, Boardman has learned about the field from Drutt and other esteemed dealers; she has joined support groups and attended conferences to advance her connoisseurship; and has sought out artists in their studios and attended their exhibitions to stay nimble and informed. She tries not to buy into labels, or succumb to status or copycat acquisitions. Instead, she relies on her "trained eyes" to judge a piece on its own merits rather than looking to others for validation. Further, she has vowed to follow her nose, sniffing out the unusual, the edgy, the experimental, and frequently the disturbing. Consider Elizabeth Kadre Defner's 1983 neckpiece, *Rat's Skull*, featuring a golden cast of a rodent's cranium; Sebastian Buescher's 2006 brooch, *Pregnant Tree Boy*, which encapsulates black widow spiders under glass; Georg Dobler's outrageous 1999 necklace sporting oversized cast silver scarabs clustered around a huge gemstone (which Boardman insists she has worn to Costco); Susie Ganch's 1999 headdress, *Static Orbital Model #3 (Menorah)*, wherein the wearer's head is encircled by an orbiting candelabrum; and Nancy Worden's 2001 neckpiece, *Gilding the Past*, a not-so-classic commentary on the brutalities of war, comprised of gilded cast chicken bones. And then there are the pieces that reflect Boardman's quirky sense of humor; for example, Karl Fritsch's 2005 *Ring*, which looks like exploding prisms ready to launch into space off of Boardman's finger. These pieces best convey Boardman's vision and guts in building her collection: she dares to take risks, even if it means risking a mistake.

But it would be misleading to imply that Boardman doesn't prize pure beauty and wearability. Boardman willingly admits that her favorite material is gold, and her collection contains several stunning examples that are elegant and scaled for wearing. Recently, Italian jewelers of the Padua school, with their contemporary and experimental approach to using gold, have caught

opposite
Collector Lois Boardman wearing GERD ROTHMANN's 1984 *Gold Nose* (gold cast made from a mold of Boardman's nose)

above
ELIZABETH KADRE DEFNER
Rat's Skull (neckpiece), 1983
fine and white gold, opal, hair, wood, emerald, ruby
7 1/2 x 6"
Photo: Anthony Cuñha



"CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY COMMUNICATES. IT STARTS UP A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE WEARER AND THE MAKER." - Lois Boardman

Boardman's eye. She has newly acquired a gold brooch by Graziano Visintin, and a gold and silver brooch by Stefano Marchetti, and intends to collect at least one piece from every artist connected with the school.

Over 25 years, Boardman has assembled a sophisticated collection of exemplary pieces, representing a broad base of key American and international jewelers, with a concentration of works from a select group of artists whom Boardman collects in depth. To date, the artists in Boardman's collection who are represented by more than five pieces include: Peter Chang, Breon O'Casey, and Wendy Ramshaw (British); Sharon Church, Helen Shirk, and Nancy Worden (American); and Georg Dobler, Michael Becker, and Karl Fritsch (German). Taut, personal, and vital, this collection speaks about the jewelers of our time: the search for an expressive language that reflects both individual knowledge and universal experience; the cultural movements and changing zeitgeist; and the arc of technology and advances in materials and processes. In essence, these works are a

currency of our contemporary culture, and offer the potential to increase awareness and understanding of the creative development of individual jewelers, as well as the evolving history of the studio jewelry movement as it transitions from adolescence to maturity.

From a curatorial point of view, the Boardman Family Collection has all the hallmarks of a considerable public collection: the range and diversity of the objects confirm long-term commitment and expansive reach; the thoughtful accumulation of works over time, often representing early, middle, and late periods of an artist's oeuvre, provides depth; and the strategic inclusion of works that correspond to the defining moments of an epoch, render this collection of contemporary works aesthetically sound, historically significant, and worthy of attention.

In the interest of history, Boardman is ready to fling the doors wide and bring the Boardman Family Collection from its private domain into the public arena. As a dedicated collector, Boardman delights in caring for and preserving these objects, and lending them to important exhibitions. And most importantly, by daring to wear pieces from her collection at any occasion, Boardman has helped to raise awareness and appreciation of contemporary jewelry.

JO LAURIA is an author and independent curator of decorative arts and design.

opposite
GRAZIANO VISINTIN
Brooch, 2003
gold
2 x 2"
Photo: Anthony Cuñha

KARL FRITSCH
Ring, 2005
patinated silver, glass stones
height 3"
Photo: Anthony Cuñha

above
NANCY WORDEN
Gilding the Past, 2001
silver, copper, brass, gold, coral, bone, turquoise
length 43"
Photo: Rex Rystedt

REPEAT AFTER ME

by BENJAMIN LIGNEL

"WHEN PICASSO DIED I READ IN A MAGAZINE THAT HE HAD MADE FOUR THOUSAND MASTERPIECES IN HIS LIFETIME AND I THOUGHT, 'GEE, I COULD DO THAT IN A DAY.' [...] YOU SEE, THE WAY I DO THEM, WITH MY TECHNIQUE, I REALLY THOUGHT I COULD DO FOUR THOUSAND IN A DAY. AND THEY'D ALL BE MASTERPIECES BECAUSE THEY'D ALL BE THE SAME PAINTING." - Andy Warhol [1]

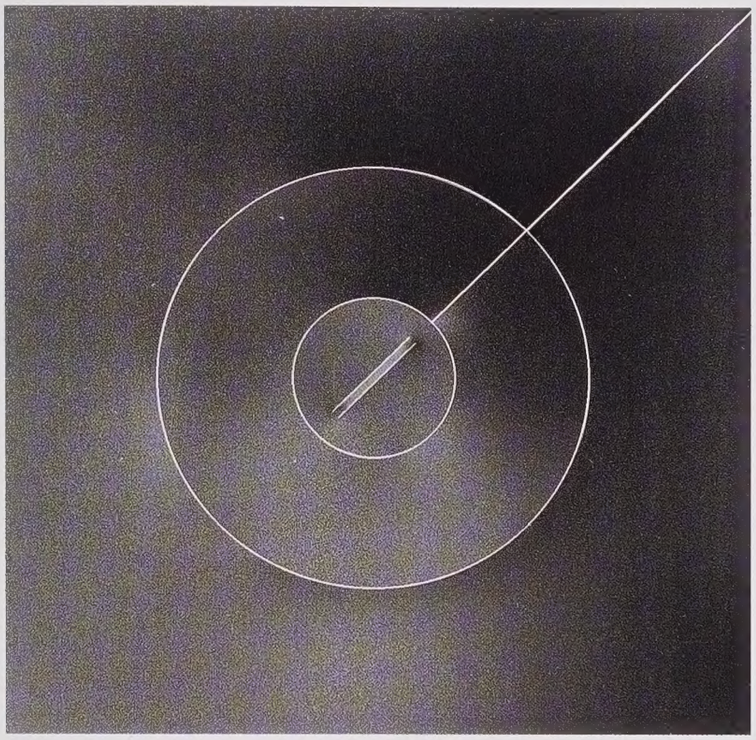
Although contemporary studio jewelry persistently uses fine arts as a model in its quest for legitimacy, and has emulated its modes of distribution through galleries ever since it emerged in the 1960s as an independent genre, it continues to entertain an uneasy relationship to serial reproduction. While artists like Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol were happily blowing up the conventional dogma that set apart unique pieces from repeat production, contemporary jewelry artists only gingerly engaged in editions. Jewelers maintain that serial work and mechanical reproduction are antithetical to craft heritage, and that forgoing traditional techniques and uniqueness in favor of more disposable, machine-made products threatens the profession's raison d'être, the specificity of its "voice." For the most part, galleries agree, on the principle that if all else fails,[2] making handcrafted one-offs will guarantee an artist recognition from a buying public that is ever ready to equate "original" with "artistic." My naïve assumption that, if an object is good once, it will be good 20 times over, is what fuels this essay. My more reasoned conviction, that contemporary jewelry needs the visibility that editions would provide, also plays a part.

"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," a seminal essay written by philosopher Walter Benjamin in 1936, addressed the emergence of film and photography as mass media in the 1920s, and charted in a few luminous paragraphs the challenge that these new media posed to the practice and reception of art in general. The reproduced work of art, he argued, devalues the unique presence of the original and "detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition."[3] Whatever social relevance the original object may have had—"its unique existence at the place where it happens to be"—is "liquidated" by reproductions: as soon as one privileges accessibility and diffusion over the authority of the unique, copies become independent from the cultural heritage that gave their model currency in the first place.

Of handcrafted objects, it is similarly said that uniqueness fosters contemplation, underlines the object's singularity (both as a creative product, and as emotional/ritual agent), and validates the romantic notion that a "true" work of art must be made by the artist. In modern society, craft objects are credited with making a valiant last stand against mediocrity in a culture awash with self-similar factory gizmos.

Cautionary though he is, Benjamin was keen to acknowledge that, "...in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced."[4] The twin notions of proximity and reactivation are fundamental to my argument: they suppose a willingness to meet end users on their territory, and to hand over some of the authority divested from the "original" object.

I suggest, then, that portraying serial work as the anorexic imitation of an original it fails to approximate completely misses the point. When one approaches reproduction as its own media, exciting precisely because it belongs to, and reflects upon, industrial culture, the negative relationship that binds original and serial copy ceases to exist. As French curator Sylvie



WHEN ONE APPROACHES REPRODUCTION AS ITS OWN MEDIA, EXCITING PRECISELY BECAUSE IT BELONGS TO, AND REFLECTS UPON, INDUSTRIAL CULTURE, THE NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP THAT BINDS ORIGINAL AND SERIAL COPY CEASES TO EXIST.

Boulanger argued in her recent essay "Publish or Be Damned," of ephemera designed and given away by artists: "Publishing is not simply using a machine, but engaging with the economy of that machine. Whatever the technique (Xerox, digital, offset...) the media work is immersed in the economy of the production and distribution of that technology."[5]

Indeed, a few contemporary jewelers have embraced industrial fabrication as a mode of "proliferation," while others play with the codes of industrial production to question the way we assign value to objects, and make manifest the contradicting agendas of high and low art. Swiss artist Carole Guinard's *Bijou triple* exemplifies the "object-as-event" approach. Designed in 1987, *Bijou triple* was conceived as a companion piece to the first Parisian jewelry biennial. A square piece of die-cut polyethylene with detachable, D.I.Y., component parts, it was distributed as an insert to the catalogue. Its purpose, I would argue, was to "celebrate the event of its distribution"[6]: with a form both determined by the context of its release and transformed by its consumption. On the one hand, it flaunts the constraints of its mode of distribution (the material and fabrication process are suitably cheap); on the other, it is very much about adornment: a playful take on status-jewelry (specifically, the *parure*, or set of matched jewels, once popular in aristocratic circles), the design required hands-on participation from the user that few unique pieces allow. The result is a type of jewelry "flyer": a quasi-object gambling on its capacity to outlive the moment of its initial encounter with the wearer.

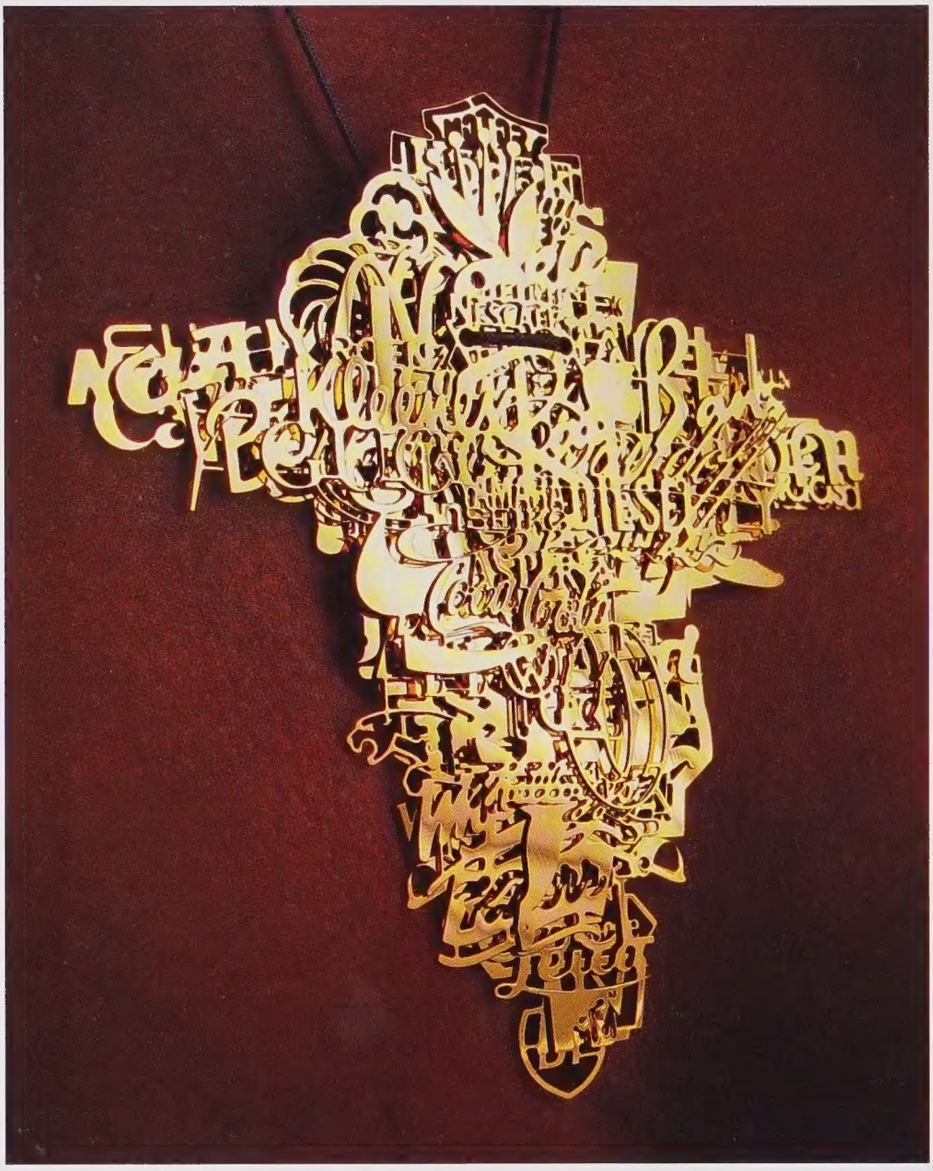
Felix Lindner, from Germany, likes to work with cultural icons, tourists' trinkets, and toys. While his contemporaries generally avoid references to the vernacular, lest their work be mistaken for high street or "commercial" jewelry, he seems to enjoy the ambiguity and the questions raised by the crossover. Lindner revels, as Warhol did, in culling his material from pedestrian sources—miniature Eiffel towers, toy race cars, or Lego parts—and he does so with irony: his *Numero uno* ring, a lost-wax casting produced in an unlimited edition, and described as a signet ring, was "awarded" at Lindner's degree show to visitors who took the time to look through his portfolio. In effect, Lindner turned the tables on his judges, and neutralized the competition by giving everyone a "first," while also creating a self-deprecating statement of individuality: seductive because it pokes fun at the consumer's appetite for unique, distinctive products, which paradoxically require mass exposure to become valid social markers.

Guinard and Lindner, along with a few others like Ted Noten, Hans Stofer, or Svenja John, understand the relevance of mechanical (re)production as a means to greater diffusion, and as an extension of their creative palette. However, industrial solutions are not within easy reach of most artists. The cost of tooling, and of producing stock in a notoriously small market, can be daunting. Unless editions are commissioned, and their

opposite
FELIX LINDNER
Número uno, 1999
aluminium, stainless steel
1 x 1/2"
Photo: Samantha Font-Sala

above
CAROLE GUINARD
Bijou triple (ring, bracelet and necklace), 1987
sheet of pre-cut polyethylene
11 3/4 x 11 3/4"

CAROLE GUINARD
Bijou triple, 1987 (worn)
Photo: Magali Koenig



production financed (like Guinard's piece), that maker may come to regret the time and money spent producing an inventory they find hard to shift.

Indeed, successful edition projects, like design projects, involve a partnership between a maker and a patron or investor. The German artist Svenja John uses plastic components in her jewelry: originally hand sawn, some are now cut using water jet technology to speed up the first stage of what is otherwise a very hands-on process. While her modular designs were initially viewed with suspicion by the gallery establishment, the polycarbonate manufacturer welcomed her innovative use of his material and offered her a sponsorship he felt was beneficial to both. In fact, such a partnership focuses less on material value and traditional craft and more on communication and creativity. The Chi ha Paura? foundation, created by Dutch designer Gijs Bakker and Italian gallery owner Marijke Vallanzasca to produce and promote editions of artist jewelry, write of their "Sense of Wonder" collection: "With this project we want to emphasize new technology's expressive potential [...] Whatever the perspective chosen by the designers, the piece of jewelry must be designed as a means of communication. We want to bring about wonder, surprise or amazement in a field, the jewelry field, which is still very classical and traditional."

For this collection, Frank Tjepkama & Janneke Hooymans submitted *BlingBling* (2002), a gold-plated pendant in the shape suggestive of a cross, that addresses themes like brand worship, status symbolism, rappers' bling, and the golden calf, using a jumble of photo-etched logos to capture the cacophony of consumer brand advertisements, vying against one another for a piece of our soul. But most pertinently, his eloquent use of modern technology engages with contemporary culture and injects a traditional shape with a street savvy that a more craft-based approach may have missed.

More accessible manufacturing processes are gaining ground in colleges worldwide: CAD technology, rapid prototyping, stereolithography, photo-etching, and electroforming. They are certainly opening new avenues of research for jewelry designers, but it is still unclear whether they will encourage a more open attitude to editioning.

Ultimately, the debate around reproduction is less about processes than territory: will contemporary jewelry lose its specificity by relinquishing craft? In their struggle to find recognition, contemporary jewelers seem to have made two assumptions: First, that contemporary jewelry should speak the language of craft; secondly, that its bid for artistic credibility is incompatible with "non-artistic" modes of production and distribution. Both

WHILE CRAFT IS VERY MUCH ABOUT PROCESS, I WOULD ARGUE THAT CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY NEED NOT ALWAYS BE. EDITIONS INTERACT WITH A PRODUCTION WORLD THAT IS ALIEN TO CRAFT, AND ALLOW US TO TACKLE ISSUES THAT MAY NOT BE WITHIN THE REACH OF "PRECIOUS," ANVIL-HEWN, GALLERY-BOUND OBJECTS.

assumptions set useless limits, and are equally useless as road maps: one is reductive, the other, reactionary. While craft is very much about process, I would argue that contemporary jewelry need not always be. Editions interact with a production world that is alien to craft, and allow us to tackle issues that may not be within the reach of "precious," anvil-hewn, gallery-bound objects.

In the words of critic Love Jönsson: "The pure, self-referential objects that are elevated above everyday reality, no longer form the natural end goal for the practitioners in either arts or crafts. Today's crafts are marked by their oscillation between a claim to aesthetic autonomy on the one hand, and an increasingly more complex linkage to the contemporary cultural and commercial system on the other."[7]

Will mass-produced contemporary jewelry achieve museum-grade credibility? Recent efforts by some makers to adopt gallery codes of conduct insure that it will. But unless jewelry artists concurrently expand their modes of production and reach out to the greater public with affordable work, that enriches their lives with disposable wonders, those museum captions might one day read like epitaphs to an art movement with no circulation.

BENJAMIN LIGNEL, a jewelry and furniture designer working between Paris and London, is co-founder of "la Garantie," an association for the promotion of contemporary jewelry.

1 Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (from A to B and Back Again)* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p.148.

2 "All else" being the intensely varied repertoire of contemporary jewelers and their concerted efforts to re-invent jewelry "as they go along."

3 This, and the following excerpts are from Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Transcribed by Andy Blunden for the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, in 1998. Original text written in 1936.

4 His essay points out how photography and film redefined our experience of art by both being readily accessible and "putting the public in the position of the critic." This foreshadows later artistic forays into participative strategies: moving on from his role as critic, one witnesses the 'powerful rise of the viewer as co-producer of knowledge' (Yann Moulier-Boutang, as quoted by Sylvie Boulanger, "Publish or be Damned," http://www.cneai.com/text-boulanger-publishUK.html, 2005.) An example of this within jewelry is Ted Noten's *'Chew your own Brooch'* project (1998).

5 Sylvie Boulanger, op. cit.

6 The expression is found in Sylvie Boulanger's essay. "Publish or be Damned," in which she refers to ephemera, i.e. free give-aways designed (and generally produced and distributed) by fine artists.

7 Love Jönsson, "Life Among Things, The Continuous Present," in *Craft in Dialogue: Six Views on a Practice in Change* (Stockholm: IASPIS, 2005), p. 84.

opposite
FRANK TJEPKAMA & JANNEKE HOOYMANS
Bling Bling (pendant), 2002
gold plated stainless steel
3 1/8 x 3 1/2"
Photo: Tjep

above
FELIX LINDNER
Tour Eiffel (earrings), 2000
from the "New Classics" series)
18k gold
1 7/8 x 5/8"
Photo: Samantha Font-Sala

by KATE DOBBS ARIAIL

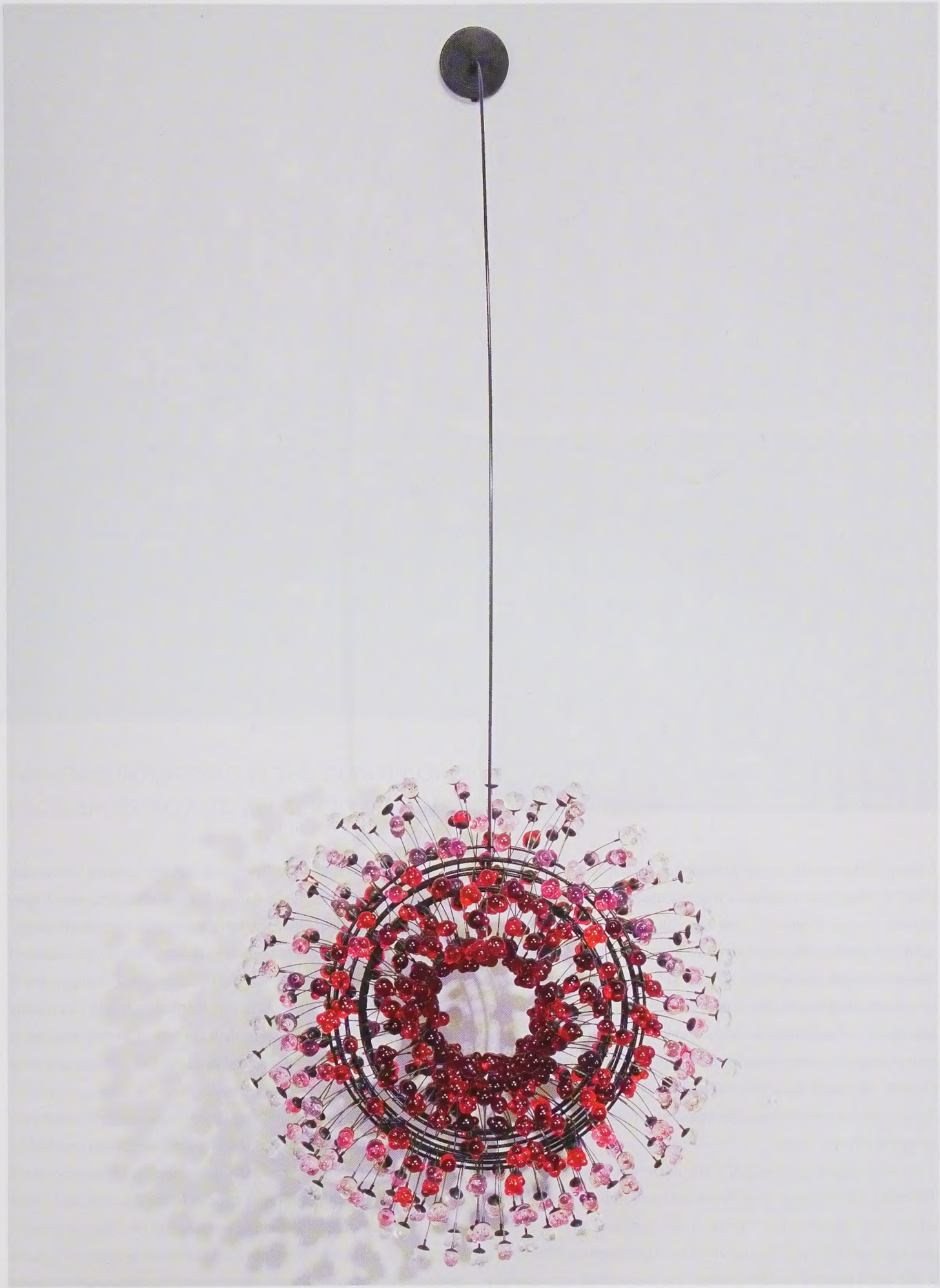
SUSIE GANCH

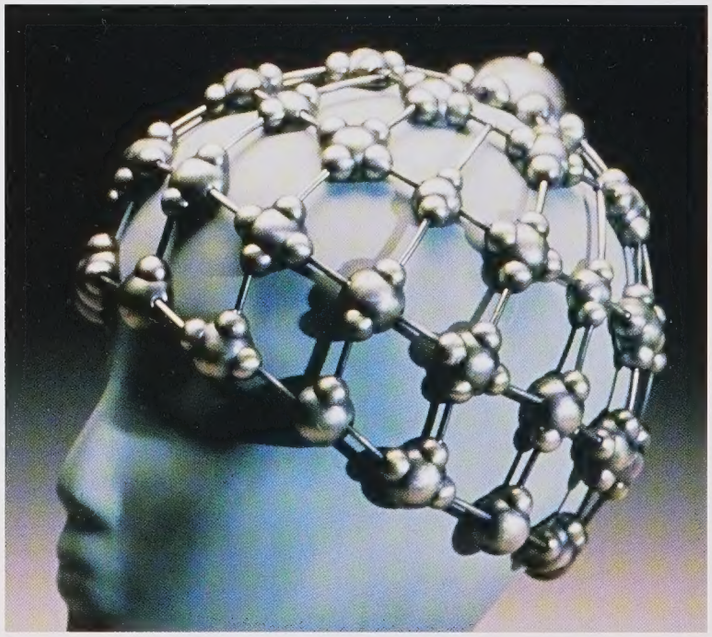
PUSHING BOUNDARIES

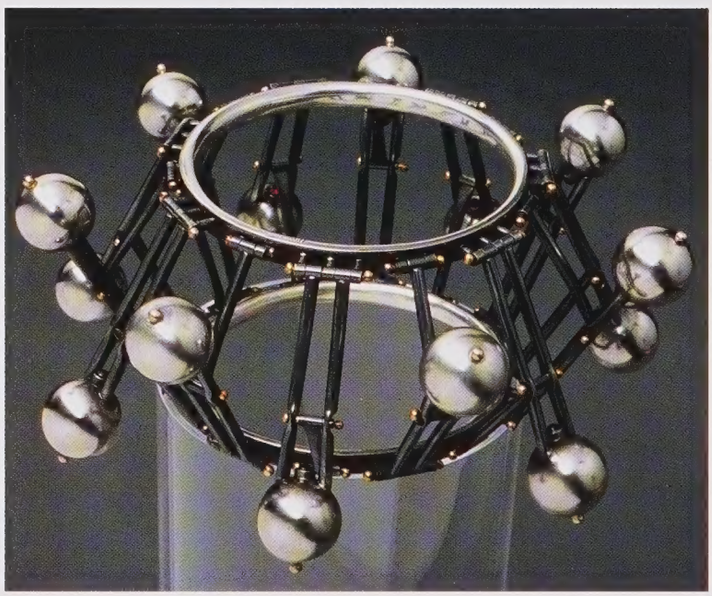
A silver net for the head—a flexible, open cloche-crown—accompanied by a bracelet that spikes out into a corona for the wrist: these were the first pieces by Susie Ganch that I ever encountered, last summer at Quirk Gallery in Richmond, Virginia. The forms, materials, and superb craftsmanship of these works from her "Thinking Cap" series conveyed intelligence, power, diligence, and curiosity about the relations between pattern and structure. They exhibited a regal kind of engagement with the world. If Queen Elizabeth I were alive today, I thought, she'd be demanding the services of this artist. Who was she?

Susie Ganch is part art jeweler, part sculptor. Now in her fourth year as head of the metals program in Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Craft and Material Studies, she is a slender, dark-haired woman who tends to make her complex constructions to her own scale and proportions. Ganch has steadily honed her craft and reputation as an art jeweler since she received her MFA from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1997. But 2007 was a watershed year for Ganch. In the fall, when I visited her studio in Plant Zero, a studio building in an old factory on Richmond's south side, she had pieces in four exhibitions, and representation at two new galleries.

Untitled, 2007
steel, sterling, cast plastic
8 x 8 x13"



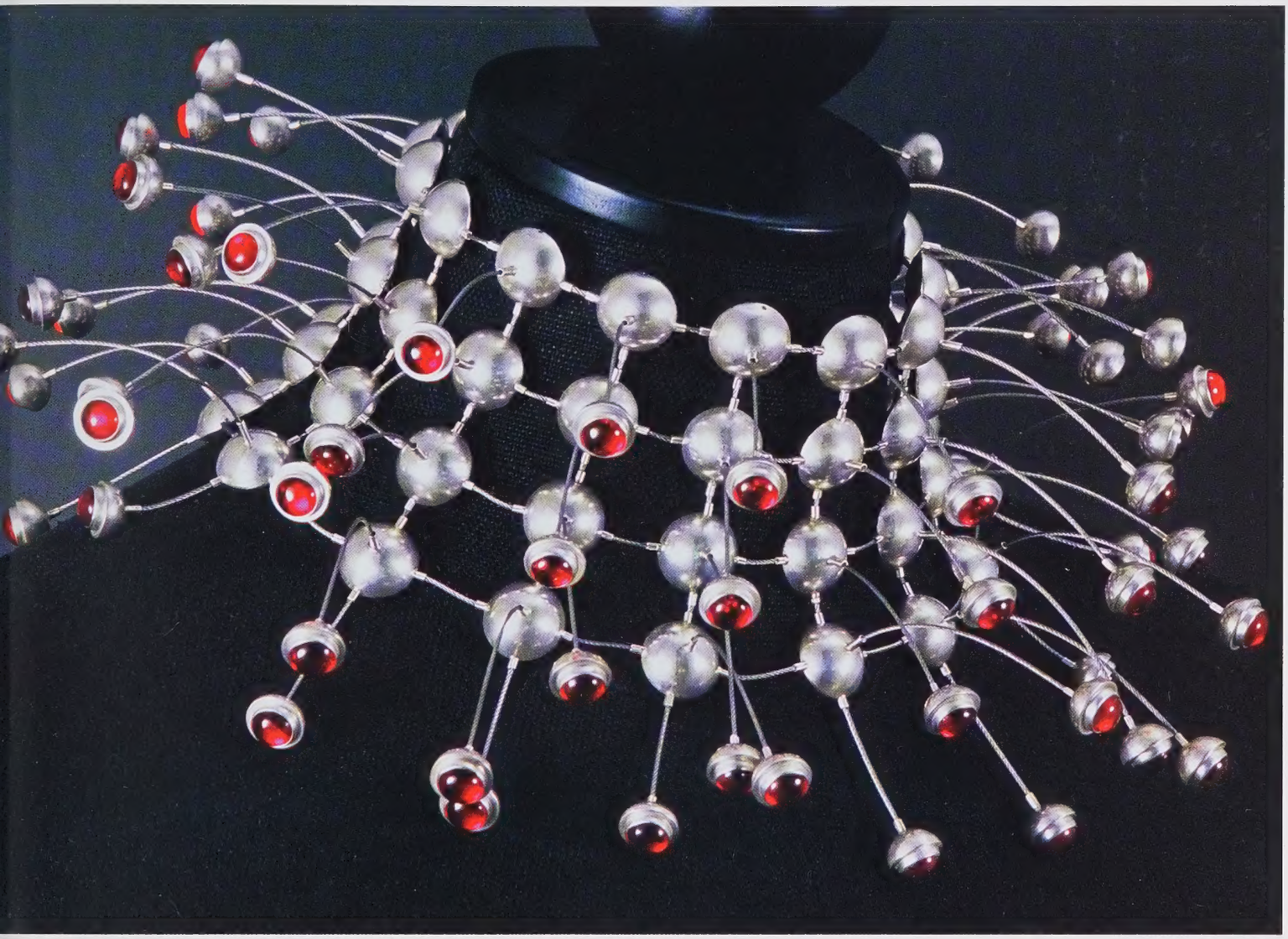




Best of all, she said, exciting changes were occurring in the work. "This fall, I began to make work that discussed my body without my actually having to wear it," she says. The larger scale also makes some of Ganch's ideas more easily understandable. Ganch's primary theme is interconnectedness, though not necessarily as that term is commonly understood. She is also very interested in permeability, and speaks of "cacophony" and "plumage" when describing the techniques she uses to mesh the body with the invisible atmosphere of the surrounding world. Ganch further converses about "molecules," as she dubs the clustered small components that compose her structures.

Ganch's biography provides a key to comprehending her work. The artist is a first-generation American from Appleton, Wisconsin, where her parents (her father is an engineer, her mother a draftsperson) still live. They survived the Holocaust and World War II, but left Hungary in 1956, when the Revolution was crushed, going first to Basel, then to Wisconsin, where Ganch's father was offered an engineering job. After all their struggles, what they wanted for their children was stability, and well-paying professional jobs. Susie fully intended to fulfill their dreams: she'd been inspired by an earth science teacher in high school, and thought she'd become a mathematician—until she battled calculus. (Ironically, much of her metal work involves calculations on circles and arcs.) Then, like her brother, she majored in geology in college, planning a career in oil exploration.

But after taking a metalsmithing class as an elective in her senior year, Ganch was hooked. To her family's initial chagrin, instead of entering graduate school in geology, she stayed in Madison to study metals with Fred Fenster. "Fred is still my mentor," Ganch says. "One of the reasons I went into teaching was the way he changed my life." Her parents, reluctant at first, now collaborate on projects. "I'm just a composite of their influences," Ganch says; "how I draw, how I solve



GANCH IS INTERESTED IN THE DUALITY OF RIGIDITY AND FLEXIBILITY, AND IN THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO REPRESENT VOLUMETRIC FORM WITHOUT MASS.

problems." Although her powerful connections with her family and with Fenster are clear, this is not the whole story, as her math and science background exerts a potent influence. But her declaration typifies the way Ganch sees connection and commonality before she perceives divergence or difference. She has a deeply unified worldview. (Her recent reading includes an eight-volume English translation of *Life of the Buddha* in manga, the Japanese graphic book style.) In her thinking, "all stuff is basically the same."

Ganch worked in sterling silver for a long time, and although she still loves it, since last summer she has favored mild steel rod in combination with the stainless cable that entered her palette in 2004. She continues to use the extremely fine stainless wire that she's worked with for years, but its tendency to kink was so frustrating that she began to experiment with cable—which, of course, has very different behavioral properties. The cable, with its inherent energy and ability to create and accept forceful tension, gradually demanded increased size in the work, and steel replaced sterling as Ganch worked through a series of wearables, moving gradually toward the new wall pieces.

As was evident in the early work, especially the "Thinking Caps," Ganch's carefully mapped structures of flexible, linear elements often exhibit a textile sensibility. She is interested in the duality of rigidity and flexibility, and in the problem of how to represent volumetric form without mass. "I can represent form using only line: X and Y. In a way, we are grids," she says. She has become increasingly interested in boundaries, and in their arbitrary nature.

opposite
Thinking Cap #7 (Jolie), 2001
sterling silver
Photo: Paul Jeremias

Kinetic Bracelet, 2003
sterling, 14k gold, garnet
5 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 2"
Photo: Phil Cohen

above
Untitled (necklace), 2004
sterling silver, stainless steel, lab grown rubies, magnets
11 x 11 x 4"

"I TOOK AWAY THE RIGIDITY OF THE GRID AND EXPOSED THE CABLE. I WANTED THIS *PLUMAGE.*"

"What's the difference between me, a suspension bridge, or a wall?" Ganch asks. "If I were an electron, I could travel through all of those."

An untitled necklace from 2004 "extends the natural boundary of the body and makes it permeable," explains Ganch. "But the materiality is not rigid—it's flexible. It doesn't keep someone else out of your personal space." Someone can hug you, connect with you, zoom like an electron through your porous boundary—and the necklace springs back, due to the nature of the stainless steel cable. It is constructed on a grid system, which signifies order and stability, while the stone settings on extensions off the grid connote randomness, motion, and change. An astonishing feat of highly crafted engineering guides the cables through tiny tubes hidden behind little silver domes, staging a quiet drama of "input and output." Ganch says, 'This was my attempt at making something with familiar elements of jewelry while challenging what jewelry could be and still be highly wearable."

Ganch's next experiment in 2005 was a bracelet from which she eliminated closed forms and substituted hinges, in order to achieve "more cacophony." The cables and stones can slide into new arrangements and move flexibly. "I took away the rigidity of the grid and exposed the cable. I wanted this *plumage*," says Ganch of the swaying, springy "feathers" of ruby-tipped steel.

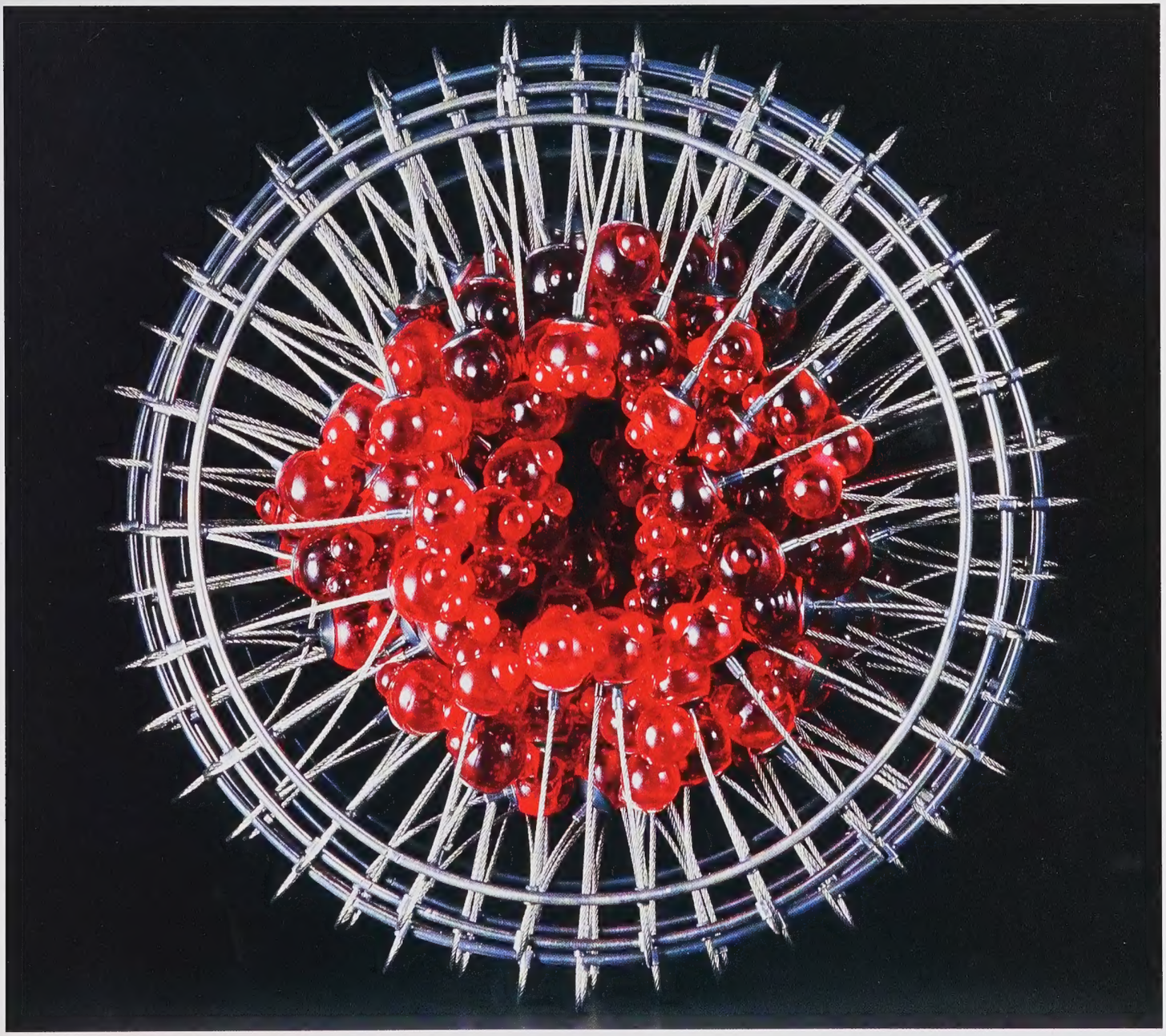
Ganch then challenged herself to retain multiplicity, density, and complexity while reducing the rigidity even further, by nipping the tubes that control the cables to a mere 3 mm in length. In a later bracelet from 2005 she wove a series of sterling rings with stainless steel cable, which is fed through the tiny rigid tubes: the construction is held together by tension. Ganch cast the plastic "molecules" and nestled them into silver pearl cups, which she crimped to the cable ends. You insert your hand through the "molecules," which hold the bracelet to the wrist. Ganch wanted to simulate "the sensory experience of what the molecules of a bracelet would feel like" on the body.

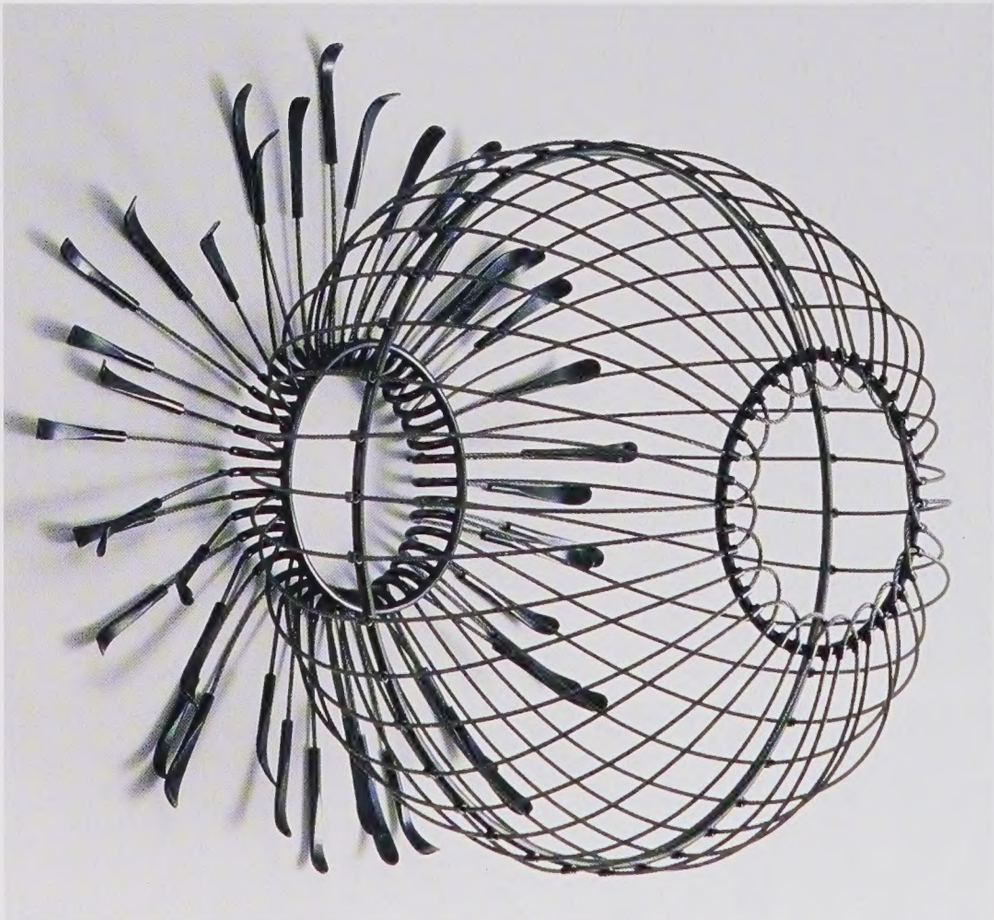
Six inches in diameter and heavy, the bracelet is challenging to wear, Ganch admits. Perhaps in response, she stripped away all rigid/ elements in one of her next pieces, creating an airy bracelet in 2006 that was made almost entirely of cable. This piece is a key link between Ganch's earlier wearables and her latest sculptural pieces,

above
Untitled (Bracelet), 2005
sterling silver, stainless steel, lab grown rubies
7 x 1 1/4 x 2 1/2"

opposite from top
Untitled (Bracelet), 2006
sterling silver, stainless steel
5 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2"

Untitled (Bracelet), 2005
sterling silver, stainless steel, cast plastic
6 x 6 x 2 1/2"





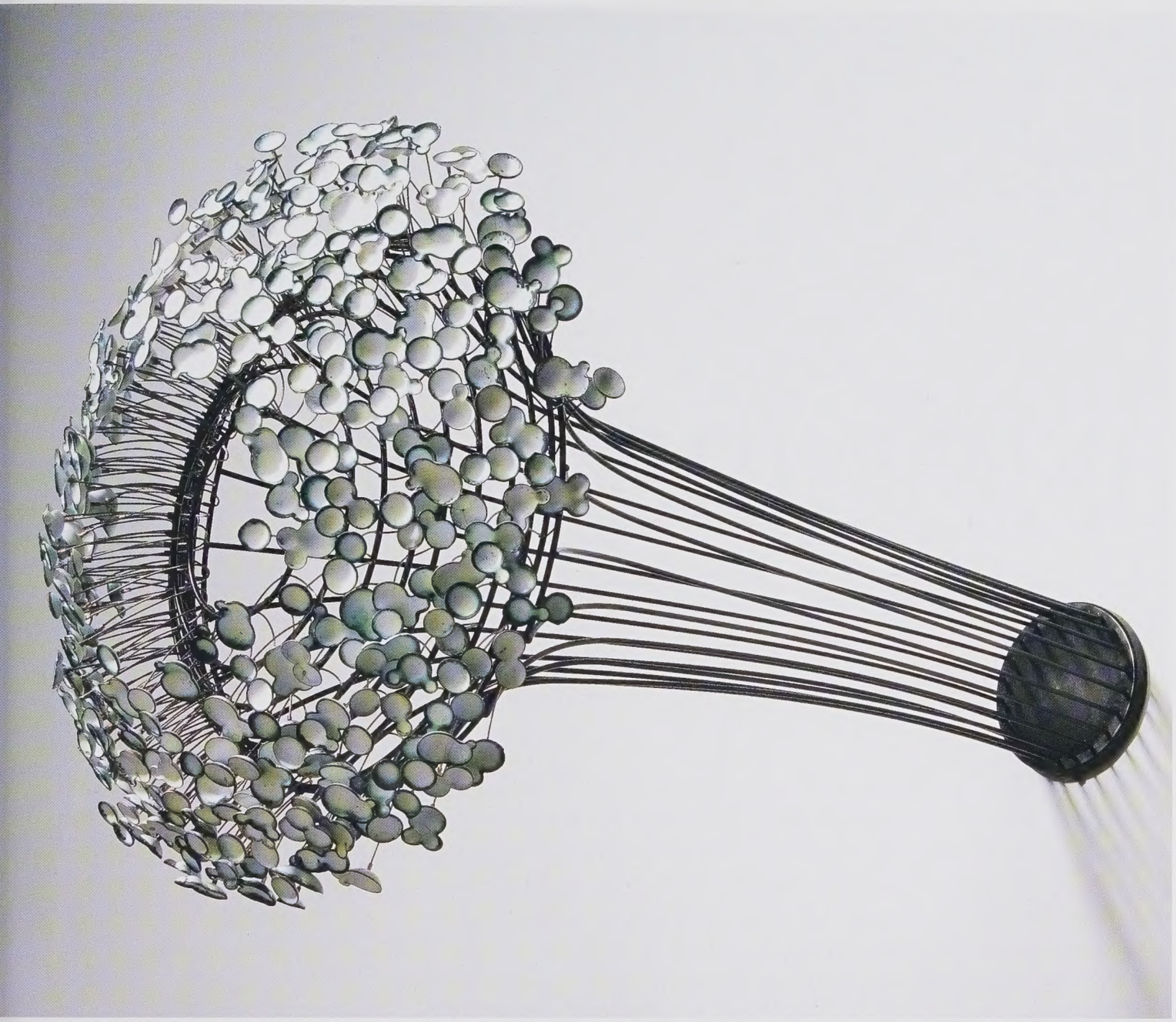
"WE ARE JUST PERMEABLE MATTER," SHE SAYS. "I THINK THAT'S WHY I MAKE THESE THINGS YOU CAN SEE THROUGH."

which rely on many of the principles of suspension bridges.

One of Ganch's more unusual tools is an old copper welding machine, retrieved and revamped by Ganch's father, who added a transformer to increase the voltage to make it usable with steel. "This is my favorite tool!" she exclaims. "It changed my work!" Curving a slender steel rod and fitting the ends into the machine's clamp, she cleanly and quickly fuses the butt ends of the rod together with a press of the power switch. With stock this size, the arc is almost instantaneous, and the join nearly invisible. "This [tool] allows me to work larger and more quickly," says Ganch, and the result was a trio of imposing new pieces, including *Rest and Reach*. "Quickly" is a relative term: Ganch (again, like a weaver) carefully plans these complex constructions. When beginning a project, she first creates large top, bottom, and side view drawings (sometimes with the assistance of her mother, the draftsperson), then calculates the math for the spacing of the elements. The drawings are covered with a filigree of tiny penciled numbers. As she begins the piece, she adapts to the nature of the material, and the filigree grows with recalculations.

The scale of *Reach* is based on her arm length. Its openwork structure projects from the wall like an extended arm, and finishes with a rich ruff of Ganch's enameled "molecules." "We are just permeable matter," she says. "I think that's why I make these things you can see through."

Rest (on the cover) is based on the span of her outspread arms, although in its finished state it hangs vertically. As in the cable bracelet from 2006, and as with suspension bridges, in *Rest*, "all the components need each other." Part of the tension is inherent in the structure, part in the material, the highly energized 7 x 7 strand 1/32" stainless steel cable. The sculpture provides a physical representation of Ganch's thinking: "It's all about the reliance of the many, in order to be one," she says.



Each of Ganch's pieces is based on her evaluation of the successes and failures of the preceding piece, and the new structural, technical, philosophical, and aesthetic questions that have arisen. Sometimes, she says, the answers to the questions are almost more important than what the object looks like. But, she says, "One of the questions is always, 'what do I think is beautiful?'"

In her newest work, she is beginning to think about what else might be stripped away. "I like repetition, and I'm always thinking about what shape does when there are many, or if there is only one," she says. "I want to know if the molecules are superfluous." She's been inspired recently by the work of David Trubridge, the New Zealand furniture designer, and it shows in her experiments in progress. Circles of soldered copper wire, run through a roller and smashed into irregular ovoids, then enameled, seem more cell-like than molecular. "Trubridge's work is very regular, though, and mine will be more random," she says.

Ganch, constantly experimenting, smiles ruefully. "I'm always trying to simplify, but in that simplification I somehow make it harder to get there." There is no doubt that Susie Ganch, the thinker, will find the way. "It's an ongoing conversation," she says, of the work and the path.

KATE DOBBS ARIAIL writes on arts and culture from her home in Durham, North Carolina.

opposite
Brooch, 2006
sterling, stainless steel
4 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2"

above
Reach, 2007
steel, enameled copper
22 1/2 x 14 x14"

by ANNE L. LARSEN

INQUIRE WITHIN

THE HOLLOWARE OF DAVID HUANG

What is the "hollow" in "holloware"? The ancient Chinese text *Tao Te Ching* tells us that what is absent from a thing can be its most essential aspect: it is the emptiness within a pitcher that makes it useful; and it is the void inside the walls that make a house inhabitable.[1] With much holloware, the inside of the piece receives little attention as a visual design element, although it often dictates the functionality of the object: by being watertight, for instance. Yet the luminous vessels of David Huang teach us that the interior of a hollow form can carry potency far beyond mundane function, and that the interaction between the interior space and the exterior surface can resonate with the ancient duality of body and soul. Huang has found an entirely new kind of usefulness in hollow forms, and in doing so expands our understanding of both vessels and functionality.

Several disparate techniques and a clear personal philosophy came together over a period of years to produce these extraordinary pieces. Born in 1971 in Michigan, Huang settled on visual art as a career even before he entered high school. By his senior year, five of his six classes were studio art, and he was selling the jewelry he was making under the tutelage of his teacher Nona Bushman. The work was relatively flat, and meticulous renderings in his notebooks from that time show a marked preference for formal geometric structures paired with looser, organic forms. As Huang began university metals courses, the designs increased steadily in scale and soon outgrew the size constraints of jewelry. About this time, he also greatly developed his abilities with chasing and repousse, which brought the depth of bas-relief to his work. Huang credits his metals professor Beverly Seley at Michigan's Grand Valley State University with finally luring him into true three-dimensional design with raised vessels. She also introduced him to microcrystalline wax, which the sculpture department discarded as waste from bronze casting. The cost-free wax provided Huang with a more satisfactory support for chasing, and was easier to use than pitch, particularly as the size of his projects continued to grow.

Luminosity #569, 2007
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
6 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 5 1/2"

THE FORMS RISE FROM THE HOLLOWNESS BENEATH THEM, ROOTED IN IT, SUPPORTED BY IT, AND EMBODYING A POTENTIAL THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE INVISIBLE.

In 1996, Huang fulfilled a furniture design assignment by combining spare wooden shelves, several four-foot-long chased panels, and live plants; this piece proved to be pivotal for several reasons. Logistically, he needed a way to hold the plants within the wooden structure, and realized that raised copper holloware would both support the ivy and visually connect the two elements. Against his instructor's wishes, Huang deliberately concealed these significant vessels within the larger structure of the cabinet, believing that their importance lay not in their visible beauty, but in their service to the plants—just as roots are vital but largely unseen. Producing the five vessels for this project sparked Huang's interest in holloware, asymmetrical forms in particular, and led him to consider the qualitatively different space within a vessel's interior. For Huang, raising offered an opportunity to approach that inner space on its own terms, independently from the surface or function of the vessel he was forming. It began to carry spiritual connotations for him.

In addition to honing his metalsmithing techniques, Huang's passion for life drawing, which had begun with a fascination with line and the gestural expression of feeling, rapidly became more complex. He took the discipline's premise of accurately conveying the model's emotional state so seriously, that he overcame his profound reserve and even modeled for classes himself so he could grasp how hidden thoughts dictate posture and facial expression. Huang also drew trees, focusing particularly on the trunk's base and upper roots, the interface between their visible and invisible parts. Again, he tried to convey the relationship between two aspects of a living form, when only one can actually be seen. Nowhere in his extensive drawing portfolio are there conventional still lifes or landscapes. His preferred subjects all share a dualism of interior and exterior activity, of a hidden, supporting wellspring and its visible container, whose form is dictated by the nature of the unseen source.

Once Huang became intent on raising asymmetrical hollow forms, it was not long before his skills in chasing and life drawing insinuated themselves into the process. Working from his drawings and ceramic maquettes, Huang began an ongoing series of technically demanding vessels featuring integrated sculptural figures. It took a few failures to develop the right combination of tooling and techniques; the figures on the earliest vessels are more rounded than bas-relief, but only just. His most recent vessels feature lids with fully formed seated or standing figures, alone or in pairs.

Starting from an 18 gauge copper disc, frequently up to 18 inches in diameter, Huang begins angle raising in the traditional manner, hammering in a tight spiral from the disc's center outward to compress the metal sheet into a conical form. He then isolates one or more areas and develops deeper hollows, and fills these with microcrystalline wax to support the metal while he refines the form

with chasing tools. Huang creates the figures entirely from the outside surface during the hammering process, and the resulting figures are so smoothly integrated into the main disc that they appear to flow naturally out of their metal field. All of the raised figures act as lids for simple, symmetrical vessels, which serve both as plinths and as conveyers of Huang's view that there is far more space within a person than on the outside. The forms rise from the hollowness beneath them, rooted in it, supported by it, and embodying a potential that would otherwise be invisible.

Although Huang's initial forays into raising emphasized asymmetrical forms, he did pursue a parallel line of small symmetrical vessels. Almost none of these have flat bottoms or bases in the usual sense and cannot sit upright. Huang considered these lively vessels as individuals, and hoped their free motion on the display surface would encourage viewers to pick them up and interact with them. Most of them fit comfortably in one palm, and their ovoid or elliptical geometry allows the hand to relax around them. While he explored various patinas on these smaller vessels,

opposite
Contentment #437, 2005
copper
12 3/4 x 13 1/4 x 13 1/4"

above
Lucent Terrain #589, 2007
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
2 3/4 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4"

Single Serving Teapot #462, 2006
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
3 1/4 x 8 x 3 1/4"

THESE VESSELS ARE NOT EMPTY; THEY ARE INHABITED. HUANG FEELS THE SMALL ONES SUPPORT SPIRITS OF THEIR OWN, BENIGN ENTITIES WHOSE HOMES YOU CAN HOLD IN ONE HAND.

Huang sought to demonstrate that the form's interior was both significantly different from, and of equal importance to, the exterior. To convey his belief that the inner space housed each vessel's unique spirit, he deliberately kept the interiors lighter in color. As the forms became increasingly enclosed and sheltering, Huang added highly polished silver rims to highlight the relationship between what lived within and the outer container.

In 2001, Huang finally hit upon a deeply satisfying way to emphasize the numinous quality of the interior: he gilded it. A few years earlier, Huang's mentor Nona Bushman had given him a book of gilding leaf. At the time, the preciousness of the material made him wary about using it, so he tucked it away in his toolbox. Huang had always admired gold as a material, not only for its beauty, intrinsic value, and history, but also for how it was often used to lend spiritual significance to objects. The aesthetic success of his gilding experiment also had a practical advantage for an impoverished student preparing his senior show: he was able to double the prices of his small gold-leafed vessels. The gilded pieces sold immediately, and a local gallery asked for more.

Huang had already done some low relief chasing on the small vessels, and shortly after graduation he began to explore chased ornamentation intensively. There are no drawings of vessels, chased or otherwise, in his notebooks. He realized that the flatness of his jewelry and earlier work on panels was a natural result of their having been designed on paper first; the smooth skin of the vessels offered an entirely new set of parameters. He would lay out a few lines around the form in marker, then begin, allowing the design to emerge from the conversation between his skill, tools, the vessel's initial shape, and the properties of the base metal. His kit of chasing tools is surprisingly small: about 24 heavy steel punches that he made to fit his large hands. Six years and several hundred vessels later, he rarely knows how a vessel will look until it feels complete. In this, as in his patinated finishes, he controls only the initial conditions and then follows the lead of the tools and materials. No two are alike, although there are recurring patterns that appear in series, such as in the "Whorled Flow" and "Lucent Terrain" vessels.

Having already determined the value of gilding his plain vessels, Huang next applied the same technique to the chased ones, and in doing so discovered the rich visual and metaphoric power of the interior surface, where the play of internally reflected light across the soft arches and pleats inside the vessel created a luminous habitat for the object's living soul, its *genius loci*. These vessels are not empty; they are inhabited. Huang feels the small ones support spirits of their own, benign entities whose homes you can hold in one hand. When he made larger vessels, he found that the interior invited one inside, offering sanctuary and respite from mundane responsibilities and the relentless press of routine. That space becomes one's own; for many it feels holy. Huang has created a new kind of hollow in his holloware.

ANNE L. LARSEN has recently opened her new studio in West Virginia, where she works in metal and enamel.

[1] Laotzi, *Tao Te Ching*, multiple translations; see in particular chapter 11.

opposite from top
Whorled Flow #594, 2007
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
3 1/4 x 3 3/4 x 3 3/4"

Whorled Flow #594, 2007 (detail)

Vessel Grouping, 2007
copper, sterling silver, and 23k gold leaf
dimensions variable

above
Luminosity #605, 2007
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
2 3/4 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2"

by MAURA C. FLANNERY

FOR THE LOVE OF NATURE

BIOPHILIA AND CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

In his treatise on the subject, biologist Edward O. Wilson defines biophilia as an innate human urge to have contact with other species, to spend time in natural environments, surrounded by animals and other living things.[1] We attempt to satisfy this biophilic desire by filling our homes with plants, pets, and representations of flora and fauna. Such depictions appear not only in our abodes, however, but also on our bodies, in the form of jewelry. In fact, adornments illustrated with animals and plants are found in cultures throughout the world, both today and throughout history. Biophilia might help explain why we buy lizard brooches and rose-shaped earrings, and may provide the catalyst for a renewed sensitivity to the natural world.

One of the lines of evidence used by Wilson and other biologists to support the idea of a genetic basis for human behaviors is to observe their ubiquity. In terms of biophilia, examples of ancient jewelry from a number of different cultures reveal both the long history of natural representations in body ornament and also this custom's geographical breadth. Every continent yielded such ornaments: a Chinese bat pendant, an Aztec serpent brooch, a Baule bird pendant from the Ivory Coast, earrings with enameled birds from medieval Ukraine. In Western culture, the tradition of animal and plant images in personal adornment is as equally ubiquitous.

JAN YAGER
The Tiara of Useful Knowledge, 2006
from "City Flora: The Philadelphia Series"
(transforms into 8 brooches, 2 stick pins, tie tac, pendant, headband)
sterling silver, 18k & 14k gold, quartz pebble
assembled 9 x 12"
Photo: Jack Ramsdale

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN JEWELRY AND BIOLOGY GOES BEYOND JUST SUBJECT MATTER, AND THAT NATURALISTIC REPRESENTATIONS IN ART WERE FORMATIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY ITSELF.

It should be acknowledged that the portrayal of plants and animals in jewelry throughout history is often symbolic. It would be hard to claim the biophilic importance of an American eagle pin on the Fourth of July, or a shamrock on the lapel on St. Patrick's Day. But the very fact that animals and plants are so frequently used as symbols argues for, rather than against, this genetic predisposition. When trying to express deeply felt beliefs and aspirations, humans have always looked to the living world for symbols. Perhaps in creating images to convey key ideas and beliefs, we turn to what we feel most attached to; namely other forms of life.

Art and Science

The ecologist Evelyn Hutchinson notes that the predominance of ornaments combining man-made and natural materials during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, provides strong examples of the melding of art and science, of decoration and natural history. For him, these ornaments represent the time before a divide between art and science. This was back when "cabinets of curiosities" housed objects from both realms, and in the case of such jewelry, adornment that united the two spheres.

This connection between ornament and nature during the Renaissance and Baroque periods has been viewed in a slightly different light by science historian Pamela Smith. She argues that

craftsmen such as goldsmiths contributed to the development of modern science by creating realistic representations of plants and animals. To achieve lifelike renderings of small creatures such as salamanders, goldsmiths even subdued live animals by submerging them in urine or vinegar, then encased them in plaster to make accurate molds. Smith argues that in pushing toward naturalism, artisans had to combine their craft expertise with close observation of nature, including handling specimens and keeping notes and sketches. She draws a link between "knowing" and "doing," between a growing interest in naturalism and the emergence of a new visual culture that stressed eyewitness and firsthand experience. These values then influenced the development of modern science, with its emphasis on direct observation. So it can be argued that the association between jewelry and biology goes beyond just subject matter, and that naturalistic representations in art were formative in the development of scientific inquiry itself.

Art Nouveau and Beyond

Another period rich with nature-based art was the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the early twentieth century, at the height of the Art Nouveau movement. Artists like René Lalique masterfully blended realism and stylization, and this interplay of naturalism and artifice marked many designs of the time. In the years after the Great Crash of 1929, when the formerly rich tried to maintain the appearance of wealth by wearing elaborate pieces of costume jewelry, nature-based designs filtered down to the broader jewelry market as well. Collector Gabriella Mariotti notes that many of the most successful costume pieces were representations of flowers, from glass pansies to rhinestone studded enamel tulips, which perhaps provided the reassuring presence of nature's bounty. There are also many extravagant examples of biophilia in the jewelry of the mid-twentieth century, an era when, at least in some circles, money was abundant and there were reasons to celebrate through flamboyant adornment.

Present-Day Examples

Today the artistic interest in natural imagery endures, with depictions of organisms in jewelry ranging from realism to extreme stylization. Sharon Church's finely rendered brooch *Oh, No!* unites the animal and vegetable realms, featuring a carved frog with gold

opposite
DAVID FREDA
The Mushroom Connoisseur (brooch), 2003
fine silver, 24k, 18k, 14k yellow gold, pearls, enamel
4 x 1 x 1"
Photo: Erica and Harold Van Pelt
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Wade C. Harrison

above
SHARON CHURCH
Oh, No! (brooch), (2006)
carved Castello boxwood, enamel paint, lacquer, 14k yellow gold, old European cut diamonds
6 x 3 1/4 x 2"
Photo: Ken Yanoviak

flowers on its back. In David Freda's highly realistic *The Mushroom Connoisseur* (2003), an enameled snail accented with pearls savors a morel, in a beautiful combination of naturalism and luxury. Among his vast menagerie of enamel and jewel creatures, Freda has also created a series of slightly sinister snake egg necklaces that are at once attractive and repellent.

In fact, creepy creatures show up quite regularly in jewelry: the dangerous transformed into desirable opulence. This interest may relate to the phenomenon of biophilia. In *Biophilia*, Wilson writes of evidence for what appears to be both an inborn fear of, and a fascination with, snakes. Both reactions offer an adaptive advantage: helping humans avoid being bitten by the venomous animals. Perhaps this fascination lies at the core of our attraction to rather repellent creatures as body decoration. We may somehow find it appealing to take the repulsive and make it gorgeous; it may also be comforting to freeze these uncontrollable creatures in solid metal and jewels.

German artist Georg Dobler explores this dynamic of fear and fascination. His *Rhino Beetle Necklace* (2007) features two dark and dangerous-looking black beetles flanking a large gemstone. Sondra Sherman's brooch series "Anthophobia: Fear of Flowers," takes a more ironic approach to our apprehension of nature. Contrary to the series title, her corsage-like brooches are steel fabrications of plants and flowers—such as St. John's wort or passion flower—each with properties to relieve social fears and anxieties.

The Philadelphia goldsmith Jan Yager often depicts plant species that might not be considered worthy of rendering in precious metal. The artist gets many of her ideas—and materials—from the streets near her studio. Through collecting and researching plants that grow in sidewalk cracks and empty lots she has discovered that several of these common

SUCH WORKS COULD BE CONSIDERED A PERVERSION OF BIOPHILIA: ATTRACTION TO OTHER SPECIES CAN LEAD TO KILLING ORGANISMS JUST TO KEEP THEM CLOSE TO US...

plants are not native species. This realization led Yager to create *American Tiara: Invasive Species* (2001) in which virulent weeds suggest that the beautiful can be dangerous. Yager's new work, *The Tiara of Useful Knowledge* (2007) is adorned with gold and silver portraits of ten plants, including rye, ragweed, potato, tobacco, and clover. The elaborate tiara, which disassembles into separate wearable components, celebrates the crucial importance of plants in our lives and takes its title from the charter of the American Philosophical Society, founded in Philadelphia in 1743 "for Promoting Useful Knowledge."

Jewelry artist Jennifer Trask's *Cluster Brooch* (2007) is crafted of actual beetles, and harks back to the nineteenth-century fashion for wearing real organisms as ornament. Historian Michelle Tolini's article on the zoological in nineteenth-century dress recalls that this fad included live beetles tethered to gold chains, climbing on ladies' shoulders, a craze that continued into the mid-twentieth century. Among other period examples, Tolini cites a pair of hummingbird earrings, which sported the dangling birds' heads. Such works could be considered a perversion of biophilia: attraction to other species can lead to killing organisms just to keep them close to us, as with deer-head trophies and tiger-skin rugs, or sheep skin coats and fur jackets. Tina Rath's fur tufted *Beige Mink Hanging Neckpiece* (2001) provides a commentary on the latter and forces us to reconsider our strong attraction to fur.

opposite
GEORG DOBLER
Rhino Beetle Necklace, 2007
oxidized silver, fine quality citrine
19 x 8"
Photo: Aimee Fix

MEXICO
Jeweled Tenebrionid Beetle Pin, 20th C.
Courtesy Entomology Section, University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, Boulder, Colorado

above
JENNIFER TRASK
Cluster Brooch, 2007
22k & 18K green golds, palladium, unidentified Brazilian beetles, citrines, golden topaz, seed pearl, glass eye, watch glass
central oval 2 1/2 x 1 1/2"
Photo: Sergey Jivetin
Courtesy Andora Gallery

TINA RATH
Beige Mink Hanging Neckpiece, 2001
beige mink, silk, velvet ribbon, silver

SHEPARD ASSERTS THAT CONTACT WITH NATURE REMAINS A NECESSITY FOR NORMAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MATURATION, AND ARGUES THAT WITHOUT AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH LIVING THINGS DURING OUR FORMATIVE YEARS, HUMANS REACH PHYSICAL ADULTHOOD WITH A SENSE OF DISSATISFACTION AND EVEN RAGE.

Human Development

Another dimension of the bond between jewelry and biophilia is explored by ecologist Paul Shepard in his 1996 book *Traces of an Omnivore*. Shepard links human biology and behavior but with a more developmental emphasis. He contends that since humans evolved in a world rich in other organisms and had constant contact with them, animals and plants have shaped human biology. Therefore, such contact is necessary for normal human development, both physical and, more importantly, psychological. For millions of years, our ancestors functioned in close contact with flora and fauna; and the few thousand years since our species has taken up agriculture and other forms of civilized behavior are too short to have had much effect on human evolution. Humans evolved as hunter-gatherers, in close proximity to both animals and plants. Close observation was necessary for hunting, and there was a need to identify with the prey in order to track it and anticipate its movements. Shepard asserts that contact with nature remains a necessity for normal psychological maturation, and argues that without an intimate relationship with living things during our formative years, humans reach physical adulthood with a sense of dissatisfaction and even rage, feelings that underlie much contemporary violence.

For Shepard, images of animals are useful as reminders of the living world, though they are not substitutes for exposure to real life forms. So even jewelry depicting flora and fauna could play a role in building mental wellbeing. In addition, Shepard maintains that plants function to enrich the maturation of the human mind, offering tactile contact and requiring patience and close attention for their nurture. Horticulturist Charles Lewis similarly describes in *Green Nature/Human Nature* the many ways in which plants influence our lives, from their therapeutic medicinal value to their recreational role in parks and backyards. So a chrysanthemum brooch might be a good reminder of this basic link to nature. Perhaps even better is *Curly* (2007), a brooch by Dutch jeweler Terhi Tolvanen, featuring a twisted piece of hazelnut wood set with silver.

These may be rather large claims for wooden brooches and hummingbird earrings. Indeed, it is my intention to be provocative, to speak about jewelry in a different way, to illustrate a link between what we wear and how we think about the natural world, and finally, to celebrate this bond as fascinating and curious. By emphasizing the connection between adornment and the environment, we might help awaken the innate biophilia in others. The more people appreciate their ties to nature, the more likely they are to value and preserve the living world around them.

MAURA C. FLANNERY, an author and professor of biology at St. John's University in New York, is interested in the relationship between art and science.

[1] Edward O. Wilson, *Biophilia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

opposite
SONDRA SHERMAN
Corsage: Passiflora-Passion Flower, from "Anthophobia: Fear of Flowers" series, 2007
steel, nail polish
3 3/4 x 3 1/4 x 1"

above
TERHI TOLVANEN
Curly (brooch) from "Woodland" series, 2007
silver, hazelnut wood
width 5 1/2"
Photo: Francis Willemstijn.
Courtesy Charon Kransen Arts

"JOE WOOD: NEW WORK"

MOBILIA GALLERY, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
SEPTEMBER 8–29, 2007

by PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

It's always been a hallmark of Joe Wood's jewelry that it simultaneously delights the mind and pleases the senses, and this new suite doesn't disappoint. The work is both well connected and totally unhinged. Composed of stainless steel wire and modular forms of either sterling silver or dyed acrylic, the neckpieces and bracelets are masterful constructions that define sculptural spaces while seemingly suspending curving biomorphic forms in thin air.

Wood employed CAD to design the distinctly bonelike shapes that resemble segments of the spinal column and rib cage attachments (a function more of fluid mechanics than intention, we suspect). He then used a model-prototyping "printer" to lay down layers of translucent acrylic to build the three-dimensional objects. Some of the bracelets and neckpieces feature the dyed acrylic "printouts" directly as structural elements. Others substitute sterling silver versions cast from the acrylic models.

Although Wood clearly enjoys exploiting computer technology for the design process, the CAD-created modules are less an end in themselves than a means for exploring myriad forms of linkage. Despite their intrinsically smooth sensuality, the CAD-created objects — mostly X, T, and Y shapes — primarily serve as rigid connectors for stainless wire or as pivoting joints for geometric wire forms. Because the wires can be plugged into either side of each point on the connector, the variety of possible forms is nearly endless—almost like a far more elegant version of Tinkertoys.

But Wood's necklaces are hardly child's play. In one of the simplest combinations, the *T-2 Necklace*, he punctuates long ellipses of stainless wire with sterling T-connectors at each end. Each of the nine modules is rigid, but the connectors pivot on each other, creating a flowing, wreathlike form that drapes gracefully around the neck and across the chest.

The same type of connectors form the superstructure of the far more complicated *Double Square Link Neckpiece*. Four T-connectors on each stainless steel wire square pivot to join a stainless wire triangle to the adjoining square. The forms rotate 90 degrees with each unit, creating a visual complexity that emphasizes the endlessness of the continuous chain: The twists are the same as those employed in creating a Möbius strip.

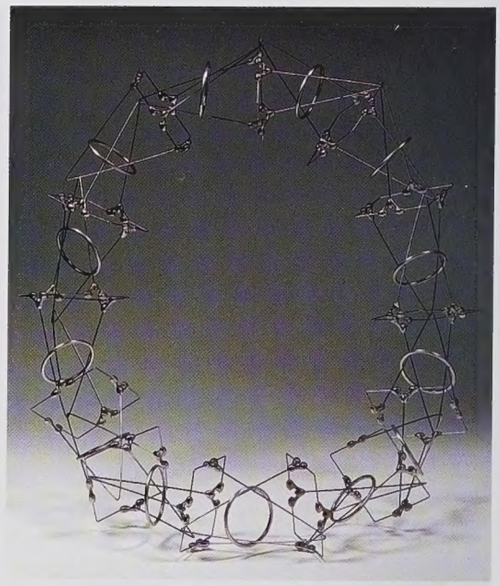
Judging by some of the pieces shown at Mobilia, Wood is also experimenting with more CAD-designed figures that are less obvious as hub connectors. *Stem-Hoop Neckpiece—Green and Yellow* combines a pestle-shaped object with an elliptical hoop that has connector buds on four sides. Wood links them with triangular wire forms, then uses silver hoops to constrain their movement. While each element in the neckpiece is mobile, the hoops define the range of motion, keeping the pestle forms "cocked." This constraint prevents each unit from collapsing. The resulting chain circles the neck and clavicles like a lei: dynamic but restrained, each unit like a flower.

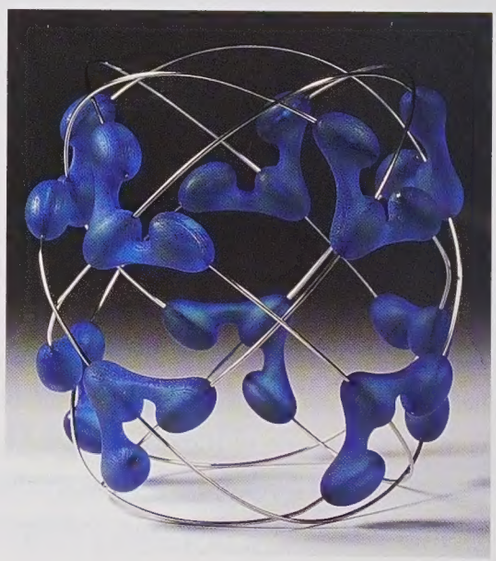
Just as the neckpieces in this body of work are all intricately connected continuous chains, the bracelets have neither catches nor hinges. Wood has engineered them to take advantage of the spring tension of the stainless steel wire. Donning the bracelet requires expanding the essentially woven form. Once on the wrist, the wire tension holds the piece securely in place.

Perhaps the simplest example, *X Bracelet Yellow*, employs acrylic X-connectors as the junctures for ellipses of stainless steel wire. The effect is an open basket that hugs the arm. When Wood connects spirals of wire with multiple T-connectors, as in *T-V Spiral Bracelet—Blue*, the resulting bracelet forms a bubble around the wrist, a sequence of little planets rhythmically arrayed in their wire-defined orbits.

The exquisite formal variations in this new body of work hark back to Wood's geometric cage brooches of roughly a decade ago. But while those pieces were focused on sketching three-dimensional forms, the new pieces are devoted primarily to visual rhythms. In that sense, Wood's latest explorations vibrate with a kind of visual jazz. They build on the formal, almost analytical chord structure imposed by the connector shapes, but seem capable of nearly infinite variation. The building blocks of Wood's CAD creatures make the work cohere, but it is the artist's sense of grace and sweeping gesture that brings the work to life.

PATRICIA HARRIS and DAVID LYON are journalists and critics based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

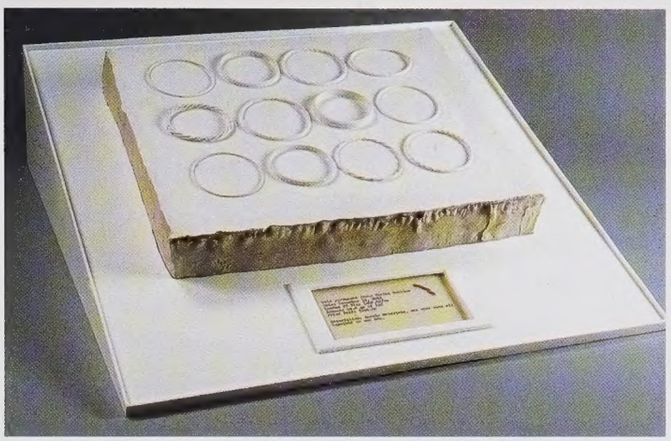




from top
Double Square Link Necklace
sterling silver, stainless steel
diameter 26"

Stem-Hoop Neckpiece—Green and Yellow, 2007
dyed acrylic, printed from CAD, stainless steel, sterling silver with patina
diameter 24"

T-V Spiral Bracelet—Blue, 2007
dyed acrylic resin printed from CAD
3 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2"



from top
Gold Standard Part I: #1 (Kohler Sink), 2003
plaster, gold, acrylic plaque (not shown),
25 x 19 x 18"

Gold Standard Part II: 12/9/2005 (12 bracelets) 2006
plaster, acrylic, gold fragment, paper, glass
5 x 14 x 14"

Gold Standard Part III: Military Medal, 1940, 2007
recycled gold from Part II, gold chain fragments, garnets, acrylic frame
5 x 2 1/2 x 3/4"

"LISA GRALNICK: THE GOLD STANDARD"

HIESTAND GALLERIES, MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OXFORD, OHIO
AUGUST 24–OCTOBER 5, 2007

by ELLEN E. ADAMS

Lisa Gralnick's work defies neat categorization: Is it jewelry or sculpture, conceptual or craft, art object or artifact? As her recent exhibition attests, Gralnick's work moves in several directions simultaneously. "The Gold Standard" series explores the seemingly endless cycle of matter in our consumer society, and questions ways in which value, with all of its attendant meanings, contributes to an understanding of the objects in our lives. The series title, "The Gold Standard," is derived from U.S. currency policy, and implies fixity, a means of establishing fundamental worth. But these intelligent works provoke more discomfort and shiftiness than constancy.

Begun in 2003, "The Gold Standard" project has four discrete parts, not all of which have been completed: I, Commodification and Sensible Economy; II, Phenomenology and Substantialism (both completed); III, Transubstantiation and the Historicized Object; and IV, Preservation and Incarnation (both in progress). Though distinct in appearance, the parts exhibited at the Hiestand Galleries interweave conceptually and materially. Each includes a fabricated object and accompanying text that function together to convey, and in several cases purposefully complicate, meaning. In some of these works, the artist infuses a Duchampian attitude to the readymade; in others, an archival sensibility; and in all, a craftsperson's careful attention to labor.

Part I combines all of these approaches. In *Gold Standard Part I, #1 (Kohler Sink)*, like the plumbing fixtures adopted by Duchamp and later Robert Gober, Gralnick presents a nonfunctional and rather absurd sink, here modeled in plaster from its original and hung on the gallery wall. The hot water handle alone is rendered in 18k gold. Gralnick dispenses with the domestic associations of the sink and instead underscores its commodity status. This emphasis is not some vague concern: the artist provides the market price for both the actual sink and an ounce of gold on a given day, and fabricates a fragment of the object in the amount of gold that corresponds to its monetary value. She has mechanically laser-etched all of these calculations on accompanying labels that resemble small tombstones. Here is the cost, Gralnick suggests, but what price do we really place on our material desires?

What is key here are the elements Gralnick has chosen to render in beautifully crafted gold: the most intimate components of inanimate objects, the things we grasp, move, turn, tie, and taste. (She has similarly recast a cell phone, computer, book, and cigarette, among others). Highlighting the impermanence of material goods—the gold will endure; the plaster casts, like the originals themselves, will ultimately disintegrate—Gralnick also considers the value of our daily activities. And as with any *vanitas* still life, we contemplate the temporality of these objects and actions.

An urge to record loss and "destruction in the cause of creation" (in Gralnick's words) governs Part II. White plaster relief tablets, accompanied by labels created on a vintage manual typewriter, commemorate the gold in various forms that the artist collected over the course of a year. Personal histories of gold objects (one reads, "purchased from Tyler Robbins/September 10, 2005/Assorted broken chains from ex-wife, girlfriend, mother, sister") signify as considerably as the absent metal itself, now realized in exact three-dimensional positive reproductions.

Such memorial tablets would appear like death masks were it not for the gold's transubstantiation in Part III. Using the discarded pieces—some melted down, some retained in original form—Gralnick creates an eclectic collection of objects she terms "genuine forgeries." Fake hand-written provenances accompany brooches and necklaces, some darkly humorous and others vaguely sexual. In this twisted system, a necklace "may or may not be four or five centuries old," and a military metal festooned with gold teeth and bearing the Nazi admonition "Arbeit Macht Frei" was made for Hitler's right hand man Rudolf Hess by Ilsa Glarncik (a play on the artist's name), a fictitious Polish goldsmith who, according to the label, "was later executed at Auschwitz." Visually compelling, such works and their concocted origins deal an intellectual sucker punch to the unsuspecting viewer.

If we are obliged, as theorist Gayatri Spivak asserts, to deal in narratives of history, what is at stake in the accounts, both recorded and contrived, in Gralnick's work? Can we reconcile her urge to record the genealogy of cast-off gold jewelry with her drive to tell tall tales of objects she herself fabricated? Seen together, the first three parts of "The Gold Standard" create a palimpsest of the life of objects—distant past, recent past, present, and future—and suggest the possibility of a collective history rather than disembodied moments in time.

ELLEN E. ADAMS is assistant professor of Art History at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

"LYNN WHITFORD"

WILLIAM TRAVER GALLERY, SEATTLE
NOVEMBER 2–DECEMBER 2, 2007

by MATTHEW KANGAS

Why hasn't anyone done an exhibition on the ubiquity of the shelf as a component in contemporary art? Besides '80s artists like Ashley Bickerton and Meyer Vaisman (who used it to amp up allusions to consumerism), others have implemented the shelf as an alternative to the pedestal. In the case of Lynn Whitford, her use of the shelf is indeed ambiguous. Her 15 pewter, copper, brass, iron, and nickel still-life sculptures sit on both shelves and pedestals, illustrating perhaps how dependent upon such supports these unusual sculptures are. Add to that interdependency Whitford's insistence upon the further support of circular, oblong, and square metal trays beneath each set of objects, and the artist's challenge is clear: how to monumentalize or make significant the essentially small-scale crafted objects she makes so well.

With their polished surfaces, Whitford's apples, pears, peppers, squash, eggs, oranges, and doughnuts match their trays or bowls, leaving little room for contrast. At actual size, the sculptures veer dangerously close to an illusionism that could appear gimmicky ("They look so real—but they're not!"), vacillating between gleaming assemblages and odd, "preserved" examples of fruits and vegetables.

Whitford is sacralizing the mundane, successfully breathing new life into the convention of the still life. The pewter, copper, and nickel-plated mirror in *Half a Dozen Eggs* (all works are dated 2007, though they were created over a three-year period) contribute to the work's appearance as the most surrealistic on view. Symbols of fertility and potency, the eggs are nonetheless sterile, due to their metallic makeup. Encased in a rectangular wooden box, they line up like holy talismans with an unclear purpose; their mystery is part of their mastery.

Elsewhere, as in *Three Quarters of A Liter* and *Walla Walla Wedding*, wine bottles are deconstructed like a futurist sculpture (see Boccioni) in the first case, and like a tourist box of wine bottle samples in the second (Walla Walla is the heart of the Pacific Northwest wine country in eastern Washington). There isn't enough irony or satirical edge to give these works a more contemporary or postmodern tang; just the immaculately polished or patinaed metal surfaces that are patiently achieved throughout.

Delving back into stale modernist precepts for inspiration, *Ode to Morandi I* and *II* and *Reflections of Degas* are uncritical homages to these doggedly determined and accomplished artists. The Degas tribute uses upright copper and brass oilcans against a mirror to analogize ballerinas against the barre, while the Morandi *Odes* literalize the Italian artist's endless configurations of flasks, vases, and bottles. Here Whitford sets them on wall-mounted shelves that have matching vertical backdrops and horizontal supports. Careful, quiet and beautiful, Whitford's struggle to find distinctive settings for meticulously hand-finished metal objects is particularly evident here.

Because pure usefulness was rejected by Whitford for her vessels long ago (this is her third solo show at Wiliam Traver since 1997), the 65-year-old Madison, Wisconsin, resident must complicate formats that show off the objects as purely sculptural, or remain content to place them flat on a tray (then upon a pedestal) that gives the viewer an aerial perspective. However, no single work is viewable from all sides, a basic sculptural criterion one would have thought Whitford could have conquered by now.

Closer to paintings in all their two-dimensionality than to three-dimensional sculptures, Whitford's art has attained a hybrid status: the bastard love child of metalworking, homeless in the jewelry world, and wandering around seeking identity in the greater art world. They are not yet able to completely convince this critic of their sculptural status.

Recessive rather than assertive, the vessel-shelf pieces of Lynn Whitford do resemble Morandi's underplayed approach. However, executed in three dimensions with a fascinating range of surface treatments, they demand little of the viewer and reward scrutiny with strictly materialized pleasures. On or off the shelf, they reinforce Morandi's lifelong mission to create much with very little, apart from largely unappreciated hours of hard work.

Alas, if only elaborate construction and technical achievement alone were still enough—even in the embattled craft world—to guarantee aesthetic status. Whitford's hybrids look backward toward the worn-out verities of modernism, and for the time being, flinch at the conceptual demands of contemporary sculpture.

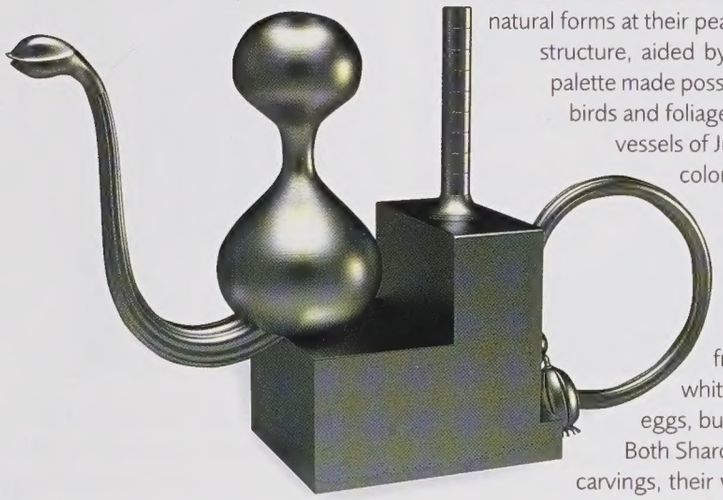
from top
Five Peppers with Squash, 2007
pewter
6 x 10 1/2 x 10 1/2"

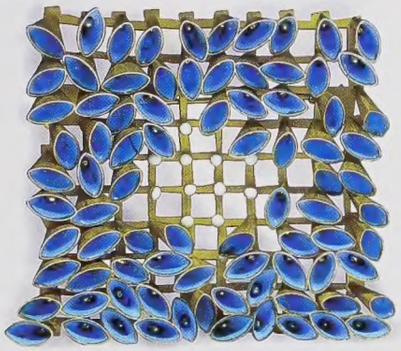
Reflections of Degas, 2007
copper, brass oil cans, mirror, wood shelf
18 3/4 x 40 x 14"

Ode to Morandi I, 2007
copper, brass, wood
15 1/2 x 30 x 11"

All Photos: Eric Tadsen

Seattle-based critic MATTHEW KANGAS is the author of the recently published book, *Relocations: Selected Art Essays and Interviews*.





from top
MIRJAM HILLER
Sucker Necklace, 2006
copper, enamel, rose quartz, thread
4 3/4 x 1 3/4 x 3/4"
Photo: Isolde Golderer

TOM MUIR
Twin Risers (teapot), 2007
sterling silver
8 1/2 x 4 x 14 1/2"
Digital Rendering: Claas Kuhnen

JACQUELINE RYAN
Brooch, 2006
18k gold, glass enamels
2 1/4 x 2 1/4"

"FIELD OF VISION"

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS GALLERY
OCTOBER 12–NOVEMBER 17, 2007

by PATRICIA NELSON

Displayed in an almost clinical manner on eye-level white shelving and pedestals, unconfined by vitrines, "Field of Vision" presented the work of 17 artists: a mixture of blue-chip, mostly established, Americans, along with Europeans and Australians at varying career stages. In spite of this diversity of background, the works on view shared commonalities. Across the board, the degree of technical expertise was astonishing, as can be expected from jewelers and metalsmiths of this caliber. There were also more subtle traits that held the works together.

Given that the exhibition was at Indiana University (IU), and curated by professors Randy Long, Nicole Jaquard, and student Sim Luten, and since it was dedicated to influential metalsmith Alma Eikerman, a few words of comparison are in order. Eikerman's IU metals program was a haven for a new world of modernist thinking. Abstraction and structural integrity were paramount: those thin surface layers that give vitality, yet are subject to change and decay, were of little importance. It is therefore noteworthy that most of the works in "Field of Vision" acknowledge the beauty of the ephemeral. Overwhelmingly the work has color, ranging from ancient enamel to contemporary prismacolor, applied to traditional surfaces of metal or wood. The earlier edicts against decorative surfaces have clearly been overturned.

Helen Shirk, Marilyn DaSilva, and Billie Jean Theide (all originally trained as IU modernists) have chosen to sheath the surface of metal with vibrant color. Shirk and DaSilva take delight in the intense coloration of natural forms at their peak. Shirk's botanical incarnations describe the particulars as much as the essential structure, aided by the riotous hues of prismacolor. DaSilva, on the other hand, uses the subtle palette made possible with prismacolor to revitalize Victorian-looking tableaux comprised of chased birds and foliage. They are poignant glimpses into a fragile ecosystem, as are the delicate chased vessels of Julie Blyfield. In the case of Theide's painted, lacquered, and wallpapered teapots, color is enlisted to create a dialogue about function and ornamentation.

Enamel applied with sensitivity and restraint figures prominently in the work of Jamie Bennett and Mirjam Hiller. Bennett's Limoges enamels, reminiscent of Terry Winters's paintings, have a loose delicacy that conjure up pods, magnified seeds, spores, and crystals. His mastery of calligraphic line on a miniscule enamel format is unmatched. Hiller's shell-like enameled forms are the last word in suggestive fragility. Loosely tabbed together with a sophisticated lack of fussiness, enameled white and overfired so surfaces take on greens and pinks, they are reminiscent of eggs, buds, bulbs—all dormant life forms that will soon spring open.

Both Sharon Church and Bruce Metcalf are skilled wood carvers, and like Japanese netsuke carvings, their work celebrates all phases of nature, from its budding beginnings to its gnarled endings. Church works in a highly detailed naturalistic way, while Metcalf is the consummate stylist.

Christine Smith and Tom Muir seemed to be the only American purists in this exhibition, exploring the cool whiteness of silver, yet their work also acknowledges the passage of time. Smith shows complex didactic domestic scenes, far removed from any eternal truths, and Muir's bellies, opium poppies, and sinuous vines curl around the coolest of forms. Both make holloware, yet hers are small morality plays, while his are collages of severe geometry softened by erotic elements.

The ephemerality and obsolescence of buildings, consumer goods, and popular taste are examined in the work of Vera Siemund and Helen Britton, two of the strongest artists in the show. Siemund's gray enamel necklace, suggesting Biedermeier-era architectural fragments, is a haunting reminder of destruction or deterioration. Britton's brooches of stones and small souvenirs juxtapose the found with the handmade. The bizarre Erector set–like supportive structures are patterned with surfaces alluding to old faded wallpaper. Into these structures are set eccentric collections of precious materials and found objects, creating stunning formal compositions.

Jacqueline Ryan's seed-like collections look so dainty that a vagrant breeze could destroy the careful order, yet upon further observation they are painstakingly attached to an underlying structure. They are metaphors for the aspect of nature that is seemingly so casual, yet so perfectly designed.

Other works in the exhibition include provocative exercises in fluorite by Joan Parcher, the playful mixed-media fabrications of Kiff Slemmons, and the colorful woven wire neckpieces of Arline Fisch. Robert Baines showed skeletal vessels and Dutch Constructivist–style jewelry, including his powder-coated wire corsages suggestive of cells or veins.

Many contemporary metalsmiths are reevaluating the world and reexamining areas that were once dismissed. So why the present interest in the transient aspects of nature, such as the twist of a branch or the color of a leaf? Perhaps it bespeaks growing ecological or political worries? Whatever the underlying motives, the works in "Field of Vision" presented a breathtaking view into a vital segment of contemporary jewelry and metalsmithing.

PAT NELSON is a metalsmith and professor at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

REVIEWS

"RUTH NIVOLA: ADORNMENTS"

VICTORIA MUNROE FINE ARTS, BOSTON, MA
JUNE 14–JULY 21, 2007

by CLAIRE SANFORD

Ruth Nivola's jewelry eludes clear definition. This selection of pieces, titled "Adornments," is exhibited at a Boston gallery known primarily for drawings and paintings, thus removing Nivola's work from the conventional references of a craft-gallery environment. Both odd and wonderful, this collection consists of necklaces and breast pieces, displayed simply behind clean Plexiglas boxes and appearing, at first glance, more like drawings than jewelry. The work is constructed of tightly crocheted metallic yarns, sometimes hammered flat, sometimes formed into elongated sausage-like shapes stuffed with wool and inset with bright bits of fabric. A few pieces use Venetian glass beads but, for the most part, any reference to traditional jewelry forms and techniques is alluded to by soft crocheted translations of bezel settings, where tiny, pillowed fragments of bright silk become the stones.

As it avoids traditional classification, Nivola's work makes marvelous use of ambiguity, referring to a multitude of sources: tribal jewelry, amulets, Celtic torques, or Greek diadems, to name a few. Even the texture of the crocheted metallic yarn hints at fine gold or silver filigree. But while the work echoes several points of origin, it is, at the same time, blissfully free of known associations. Nivola's formal art education includes graphics, drawing, and painting; she has also studied fashion in pre-World War II Paris, and calls upon the traditional decorative arts she learned as a child in Germany. Only after emigrating to America and raising two children did Nivola begin to make jewelry, and when she did, it seemed be more informed by drawing or sculpture than by conventional ornamentation.

"Adornments" represents a selection of 14 pieces spanning the years 1974 through 1987. If viewed a certain way, one can see the eccentric forms used by Hermann Jünger—only pliable—or the sculpture of Eva Hesse—only wearable. There is strict symmetry in the compositions, but it is balanced with enough subtle differences and irregularities to make it interesting. All Nivola's work starts with a main element: a piece that encircles the neck, lies across the shoulders, or is pinned to the front of a dress. Coming off this "anchor" are shapes and forms that hang, drop, droop, and dangle. Often these shapes are connected, literally, by a thread, giving the work a spidery, delicate quality. In *Achilles Harp*, a lyre-like form sits across the shoulders in a thin, sweeping arc; descending from the center is an impossibly slender thread with a tiny cruciform element at the end. In *Timeless Pendulum*, the same lyre shape is repeated; only in this case, it's more robust and striped like a fat snake. A thick row of fringe cascades down from the arc, almost obscuring the central hanging element.

Some pieces work within a more familiar necklace format. *First Blessing* starts with a tight choker, off of which protrude small seed shapes and a long cascading pendulum of disparate elements, some stuffed and colorful, some flat. *Byzantine Seeds* repeats the collar-with-seeds design, but the hanging element drops down past the navel and almost to the wearer's crotch. *Zenith Balance* is a neckpiece with three pendant-like elements (two falling from the front, one in the center of the back), which would be much more amusing to wear. The two front pendants would swing gleefully over the wearer's breasts, making them, and the wearer, unavoidable to watch.

Summer Icicles and *Festival of Queen Bees* stray the furthest from traditional jewelry forms and references. *Summer Icicles* starts with a simple arched line from which descends a tangle of thin threads. These create a nonsensical, loopy frame, inside of which hang seven colorful elongated pods and a singular little cross. *Festival of Queen Bees* also relies on a simple arched line, although in this case the line is thicker and upturned on the ends like a smile. Dropping down from the top element is an ovoid shape, something like an upside-down hive, framing a network of threads each interconnected to tiny bee figures. These marvelous bees, 23 in all, are each unique. Some have wings, others little vestigial stumps; some are just fat little forms with colorful bellies but no less beelike in their simplicity. While they sit perfectly still in the Plexiglas frame, the use of the interconnected lines and placement of the forms askew from one another make the bees appear wonderfully busy.

What is most surprising is that Nivola's work has flown under the radar for so long. Perhaps it is because she did not come from a particular school or guild, or perhaps it is the materials or techniques she employs. Clearly Nivola is not bogged down by convention, but she is not alone. Other jewelers, including Arline Fisch, have explored jewelry as an art form that involves a more expansive corporeal territory, so the perimeters pushed by Nivola aren't so very unusual. Her use of textile techniques, too, is not so extraordinary, but what is different is the combination of these techniques with an eye more informed by drawing than smithing. The results are wonderfully eccentric statements of what jewelry can be.

CLAIRE SANFORD is a metalsmith, jeweler, and partner in Top Dog Studio in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

from top
Achilles Harp, 1975-76
crocheted, whipped, sewn and hammered metallic yarns, silks and Indian brocade
height 10"

Summer Icicles, 1977-78
crocheted, whipped, sewn and appliquéd with metallic yarns, silks, brocade and metallic string
height 22"

Festival of Queen Bees, 1980-81
crocheted, whipped, knitted, sewn and appliquéd with metallic yarns, silks and brocade stuffed with unspun wool
height 15"

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by DANA SINGER

SNAG 2008 CONFERENCE SPONSORS IN SAVANNAH

Thank you to Rio Grande, worldwide distributor of tools and equipment, for sponsoring SNAG's annual conference for the fourth year in a row. Held this year in Savannah, March 5–8, the conference also enjoyed generous financial support from Charon Kransen Arts, Myron Toback, Inc., Savannah College of Art & Design, Otto Frei, Bill Gangi/Multisensory Arts, Facérè Jewelry Art Gallery, United Precious Metals Refining, MJSA, E.B. Fitler, and Tim Roark Inc., to whom we are grateful for their Silver, Platinum and Gold level sponsorships.

SAVANNAH STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The support of Jewelers Mutual Charitable Giving Fund and Todd Reed Inc., together with a distinguished list of individual jewelry designers, allowed forty-two undergraduate and graduate students studying jewelry and metals to receive scholarships that helped them attend SNAG's conference in Savannah. Thank you to jewelry designer Barbara Heinrich, a former SNAG board member, for launching and coordinating the extensive fundraising project that made these scholarships possible.

FINAL SNAG WORKSHOP IN 2007

The San Diego State University Jewelry Student Coop hosted a workshop last November by Myra Mimlitsch-Gray on "Metal Spouts and Handles," underwritten by a grant received from SNAG in 2007. The night before the workshop, Mimlitsch-Gray gave a public lecture about both her work and her recent Arts/Industry residency at Kohler Inc.

SNAG LAUNCHES FOUR ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS

SNAG recently added four online discussion forums, each with its own moderator, to its list of member benefits. The four ongoing discussions are Studio Jewelers, moderated by Anne Larsen; Educators, moderated by Frankie Flood; Students, moderated by Corey Ackelmire; and Buy/Sell/Trade, moderated by Theresa Masters. Be sure to check them out through www.snagmetalsmith.org.

GUEST CURATORS OF EXHIBITION IN PRINT 2008

Kate Bonansinga, Director, Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, University of Texas, El Paso, and Rachelle Thiewes, professor, art metals, also of the University of Texas, El Paso, were chosen by *Metalsmith*'s Editorial Advisory Committee from submitted proposals to guest curate the 2008 "Exhibition in Print." The curators will explore the theme "Equilibrium," presenting art that engages the body as site and alters sensorial experience. The work selected will impact one or more of the five senses and, by extension, the perceptions and actions of the viewer, the wearer, or both. The work featured will also be exhibited at the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts, in Spring 2009. Published every August, *Metalsmith's* "Exhibition in Print" is the special annual issue, alternating between juried and curated content.

DANA SINGER is executive director of SNAG.

clockwise from top left
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray teaching a SNAG-sponsored workshop at San Diego State University

Opening night pin swap at SNAG's Savannah conference

A break out session during the 2008 SNAG conference

Kate Bonansinga (left) and Rachelle Thiewes (right), guest co-curators for *Metalsmith*'s 2008 "Exhibition in Print"

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Neil Forrest, *Pinks*, 1999 (trivet) Egyptian faience, porcelain & grout, 20"x5"x3"

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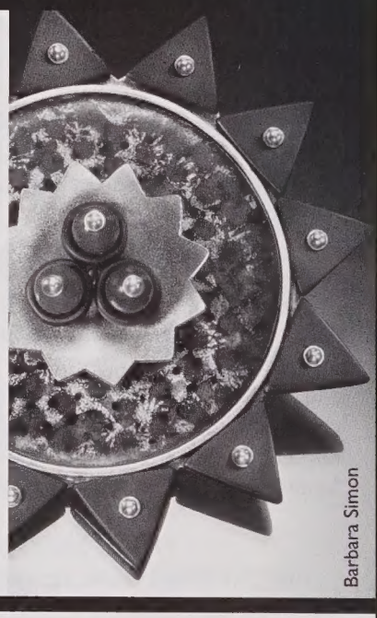
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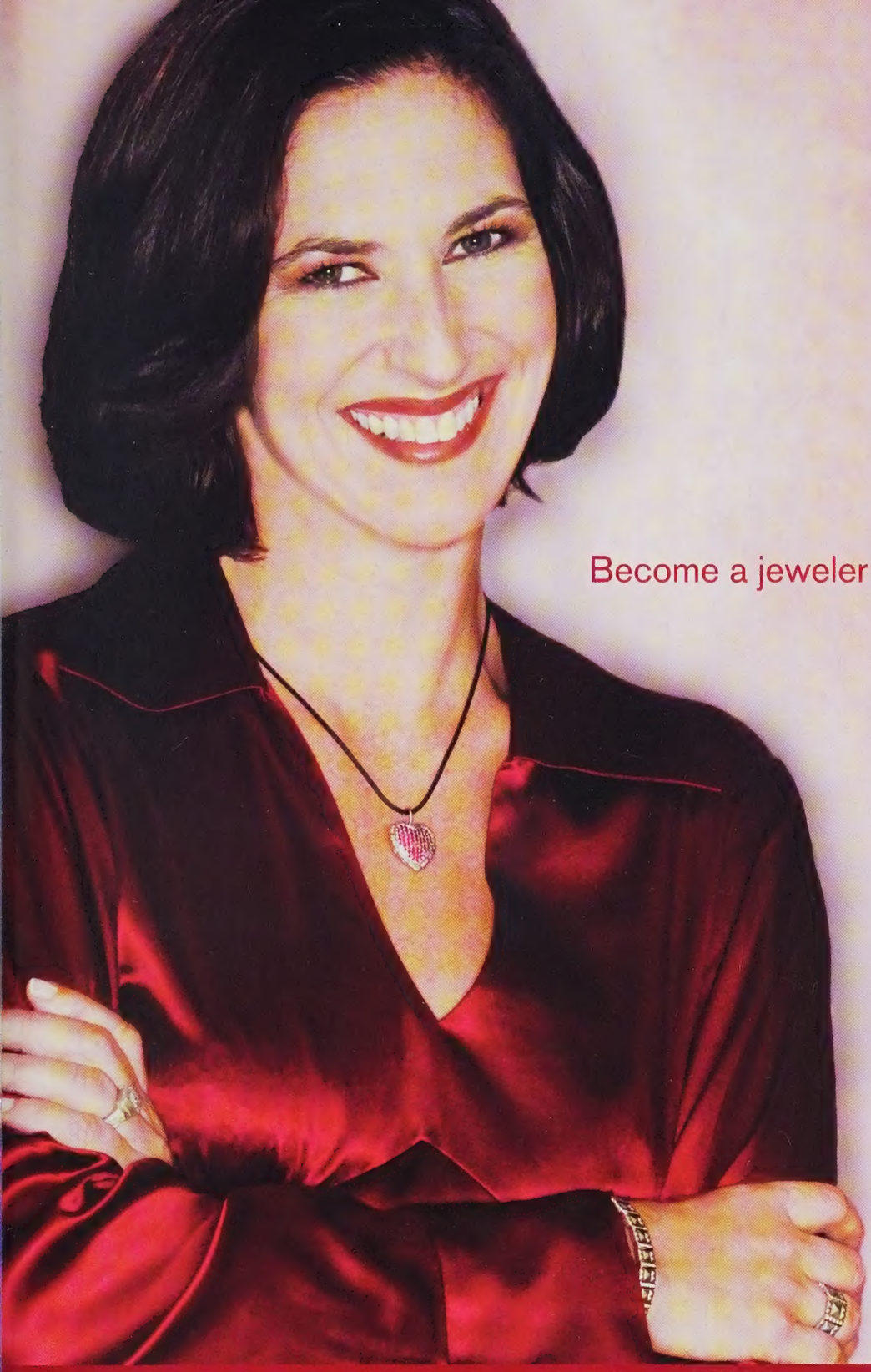

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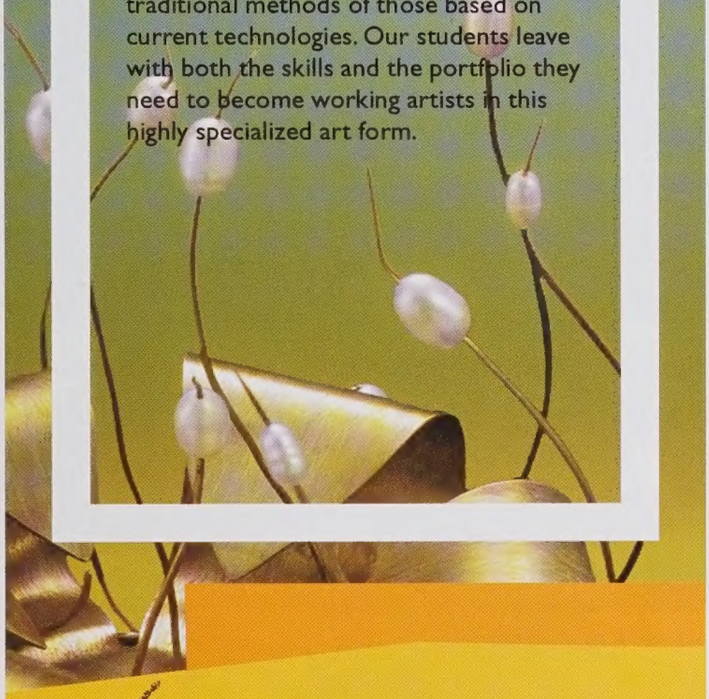

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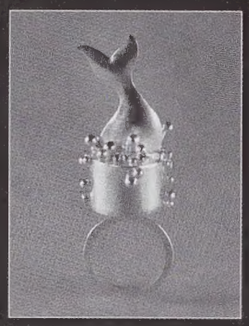

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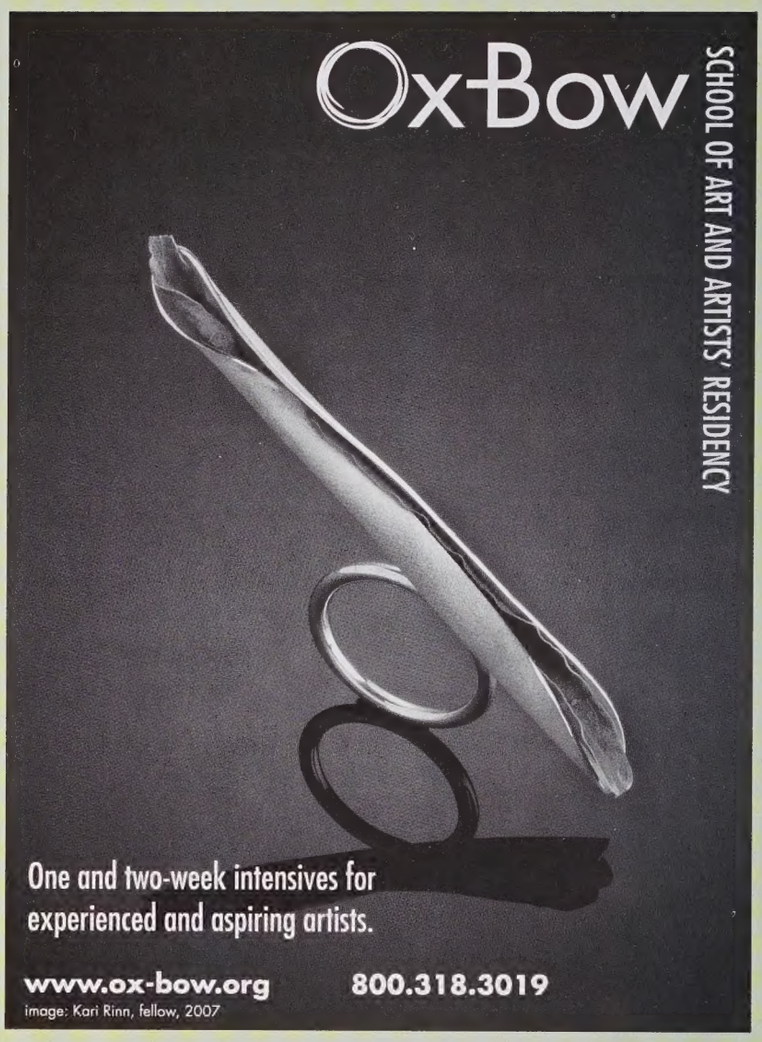

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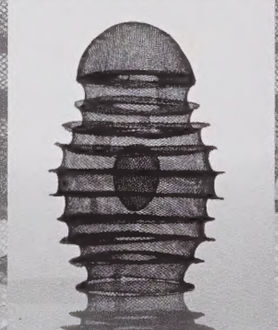

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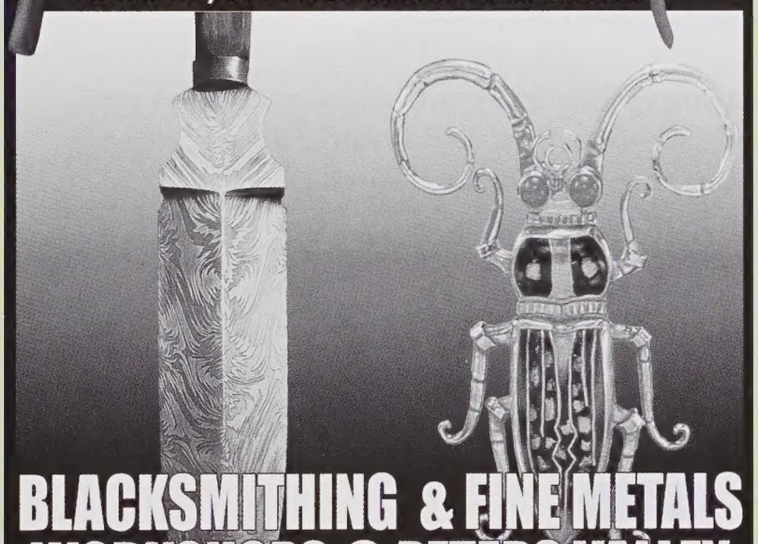

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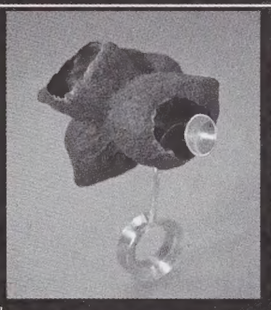

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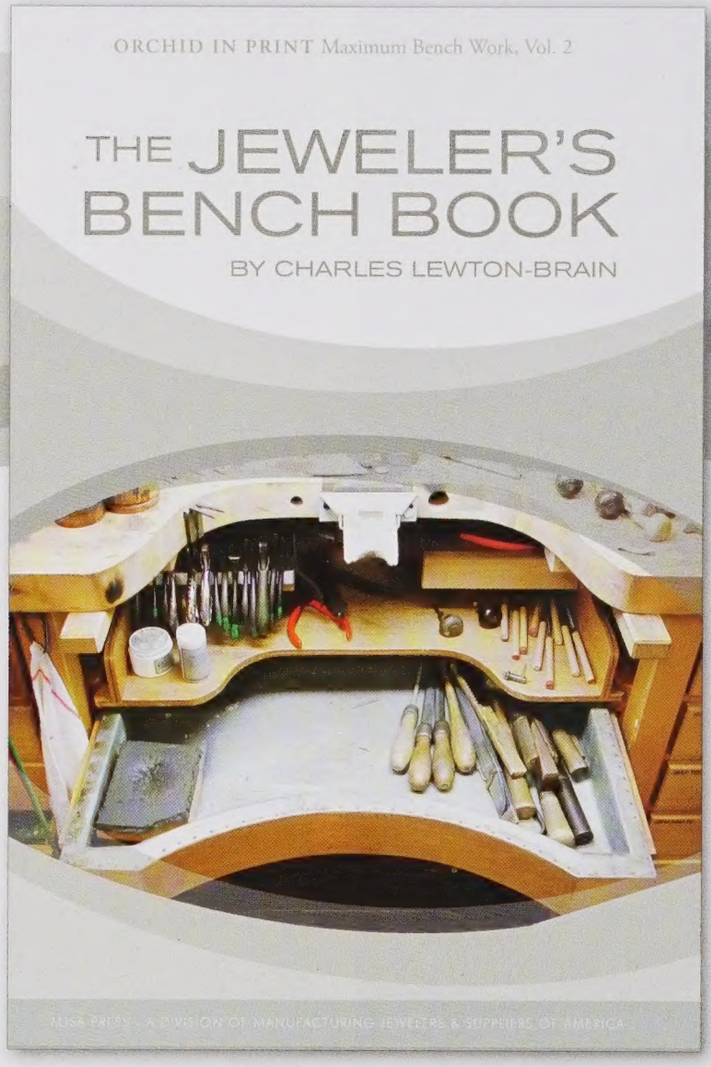
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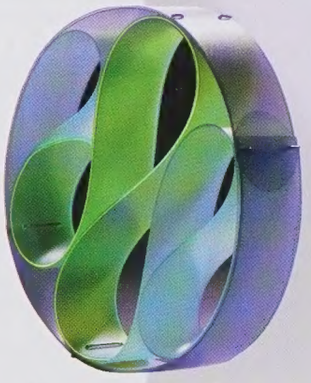

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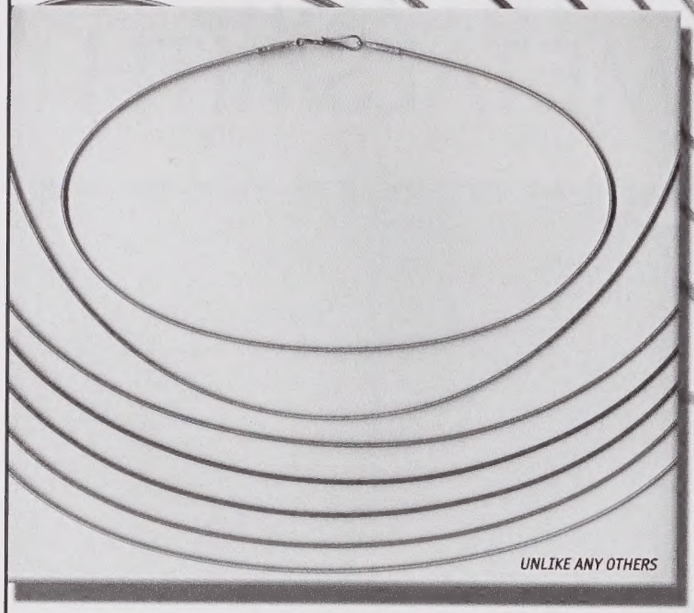

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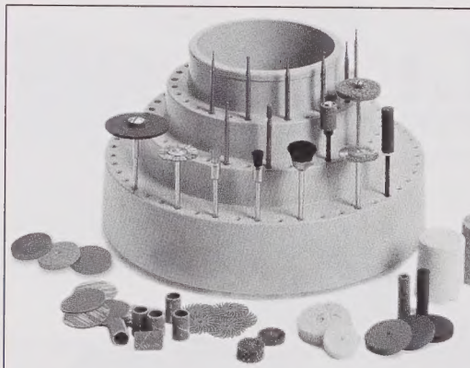

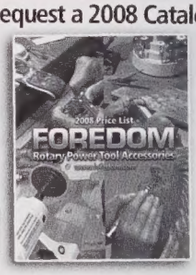

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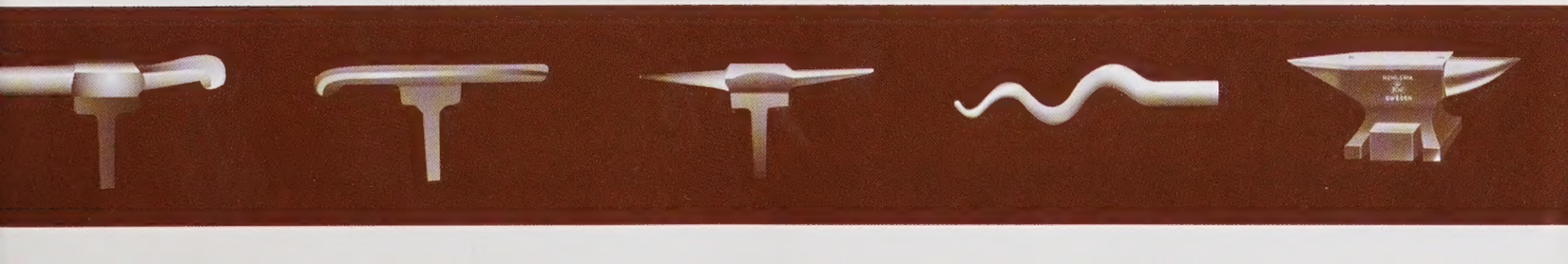

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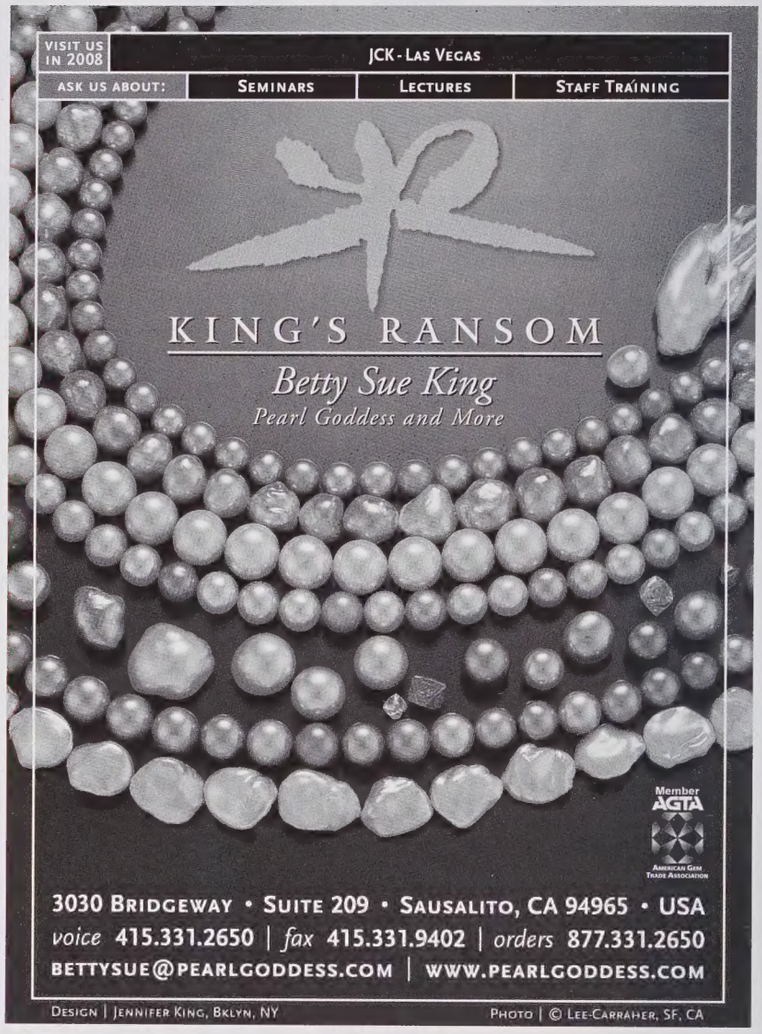
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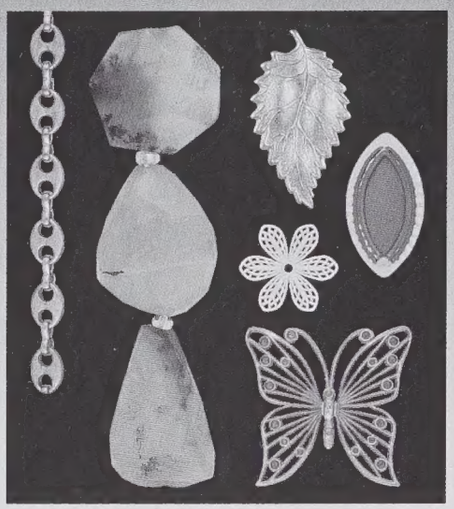

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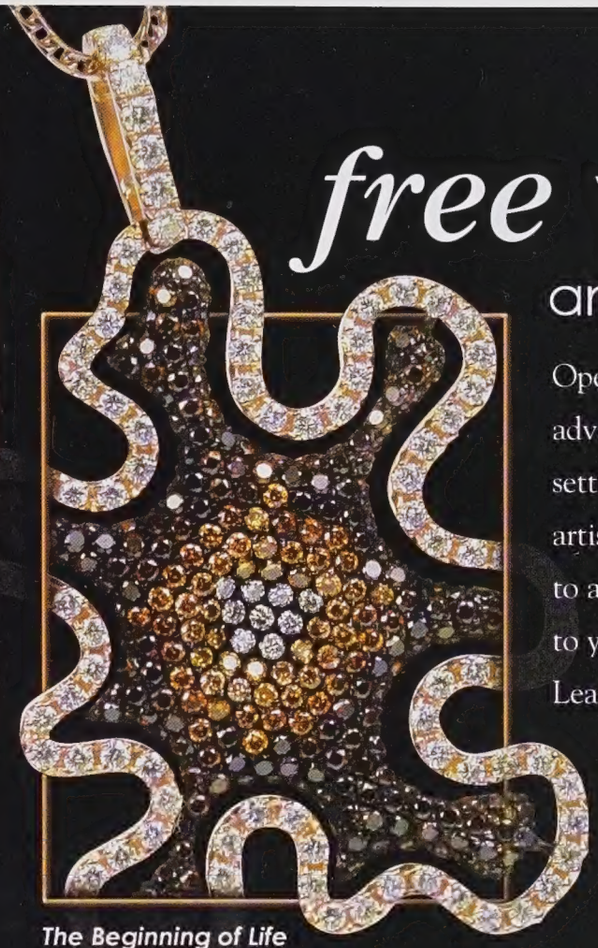

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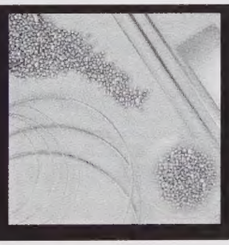

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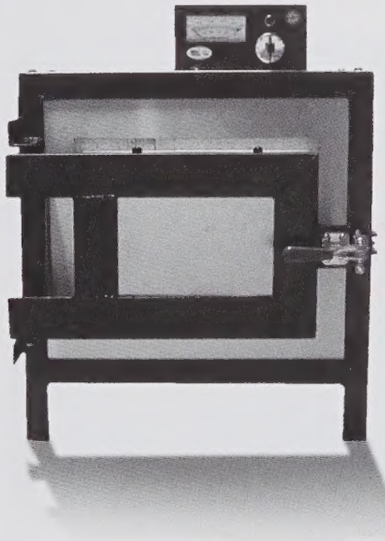

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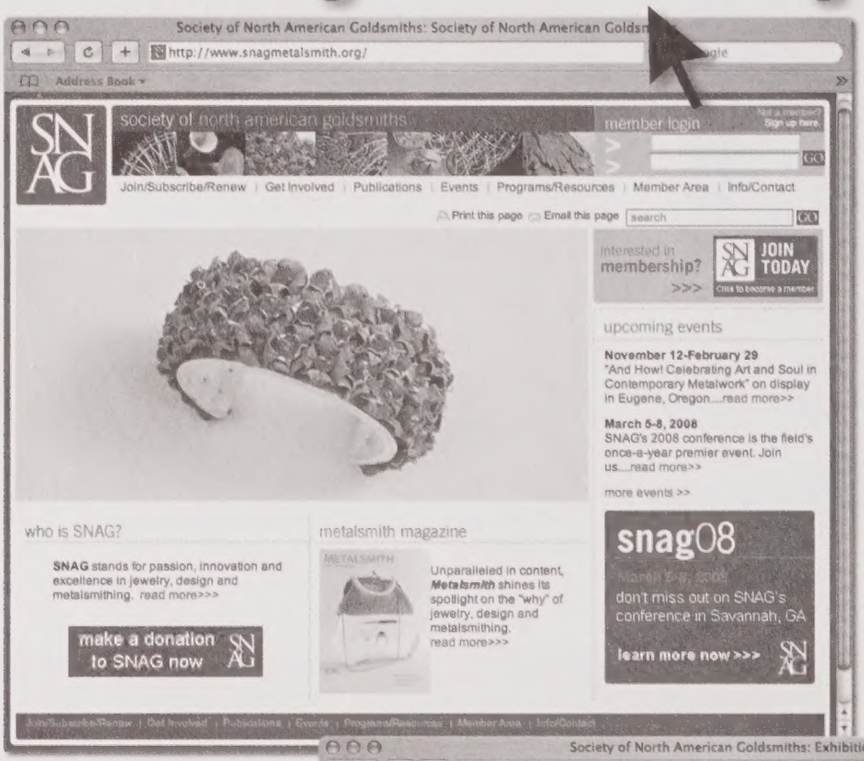
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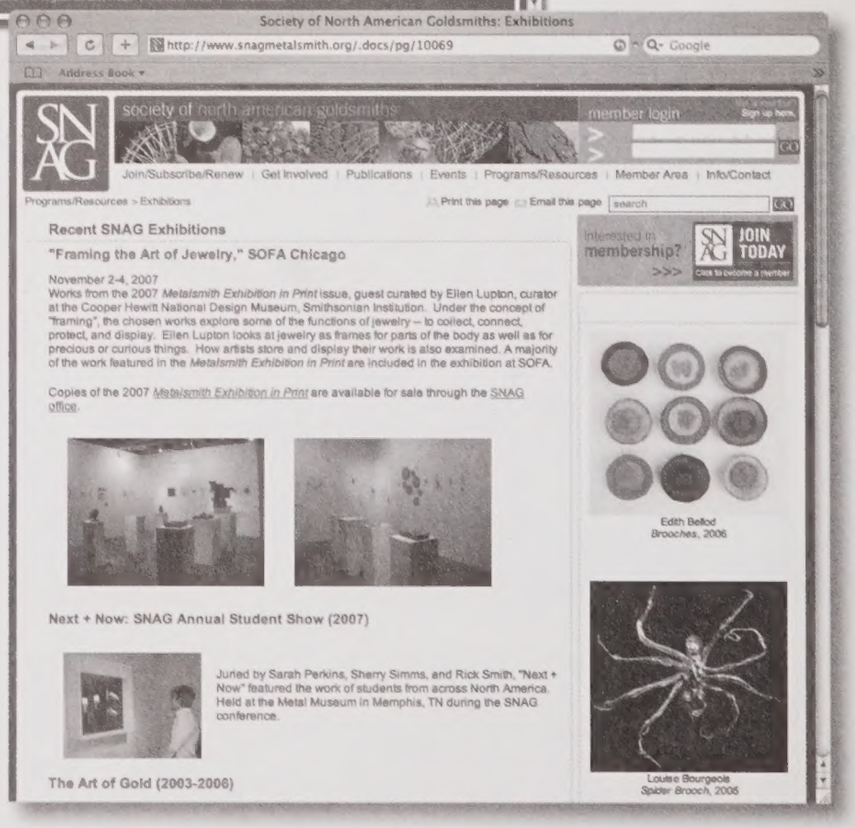
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Copies of the 2007 Metalsmith Exhibition in Print are available for sale through the SNAG office.
Edith Bellod
Brooches, 2006
Next + Now: SNAG Annual Student Show (2007)
Juried by Sarah Perkins, Sherry Simms, and Rick Smith, "Next + Now" featured the work of students from across North America. Held at the Metal Museum in Memphis, TN during the SNAG conference.
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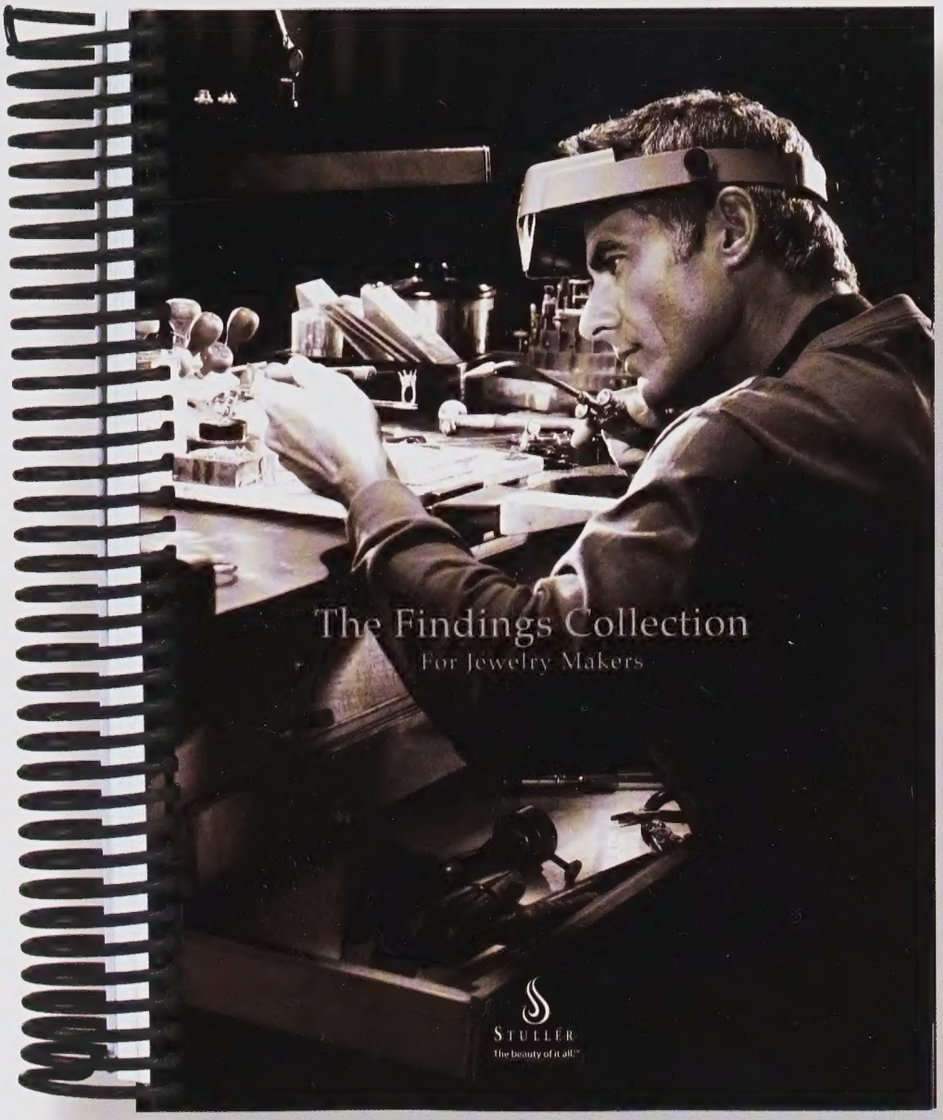

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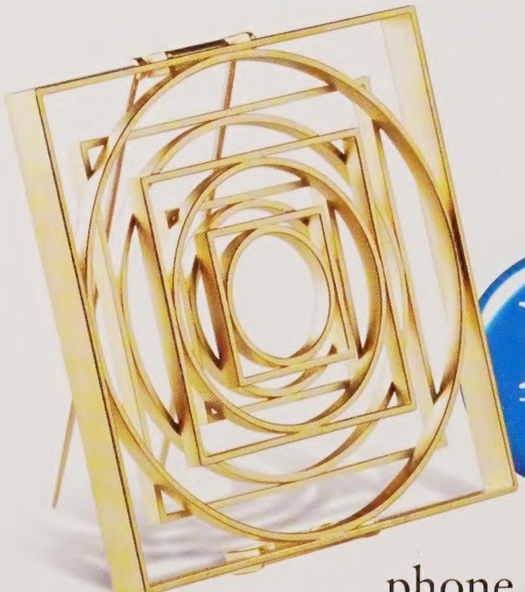

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